00049031

NOT TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY.

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

# THE

# RÁMÁYANA OF TULSI DÁS.

TRANSLATED BY

F. S. GROWSE, M.A., B.C.S.,

FELLOW OF THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY.

49031

## BOOK I.

## CHILDHOOD.

The Rámáyana of Tulsi Dás is more popular and more honoured by the people of the North-Western Provinces than the Bible is by the corresponding classes in England."

GRIFFITH.

Dxa 19

ALLAHABAD:

NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES GOVERNMENT PRESS.

1877.

00049031

## ERRATA.

Page 17, *note*—for *Lamentio* read *Laurentio.*

„ 72, line 2 from bottom—'Narsin' read 'Narsinh.'

„ 94, line 5—for 'troube' read 'trouble.'

„ 97, line 6 from bottom—for 'father' read 'feather.'

„ 100, line 8 from bottom—for 'most' read 'must.'

„ 129, last line, for 'inking' read 'winking.'

„ 135, after 'His will be the glory,' insert 'my lord, upon whom your favour rests.'

## CORRIGENDA.

Page 53, *Dohá* 95—for and 'triumphed over host and all, yet read 'he and his army were defeated.'

„ 60, line 25—for 'the banquet-table of Bhaváni and her mother' read 'the banquet in the house where dwelt the Great Mother Bhaváni.'

„ 63, line 5—for 'called all the gods' read 'called all the hills and lakes.'

„ 63, line 13—for 'fame' read 'birth.'

# INDEX OF PRINCIPAL NAMES.


Aditi, 24, 73, 107.
Agastya, 3. 4, 25, 34, 36.
Ahalyá, 19.
Ajámil, 20.
Akampan, 100.
Alaka, 103.
Amaravati, 86, 99.
Angad, 15
Ari-mardan, 87, 97.
Atikaya, 100.
Avadh, 14, 20, 26, 30, &c.
Ayodhyá, 13.

Balaráma, 15, 16.
Báli, 20, 23, 101.
Bánásur, 140.
Bharatwája, 23, 32, 33, 63, 74.
Bharat, 14, 31, 113, 180.
Bhogavati, 99.
Bhrigu, 42, 149, &c.
Bhringi, 57.
Bijay, 72.
Bir-bhadra, 42.

Chitra-ketu, 49.
Chitra-kút, 24.

Daksha, 34, 40, 41, 49, 60.
Dandaka, 19, 34.
Dasarath, 14, 73, 107, &c.
Deva-huti, 82.
Dhanvantari, 5.
Dharm-ruchi, 87, 88, 98.
Dhruva, 20, 82.
Dhumra-ketu, 100.
Dúshan, 12.

Ek-tanu, 91.

Gádhi, 117, 121, 152, 196.
Ganes, 1, 15, 61.
Gautama, 19; 120.
Gomati, 82.

Hanumán, 1, 7, 14, 20, 21.
Himálaya (Himáchal, Himavant), 42, 44, 50, 55—63, 179.
Hiranyaksha, 72.
Hiranya-kasipu, 20, 49, 72.

Indrajít, 104.

Jábáli, 185.
Jalandhar, 73.
Jamad-agni, 153.
Jamavant, 7.
Janak, 104, 121, &c.
Jasodá, 16.
Jatáyu, 19, 55.
Jay, 72.

Kaikeyi, 30, 108.
Káka-bhusundi, 23, 71, 84, 112.
Kála-ketu, 95.
Kála-nemi, 7, 21.
Kalpa-taru (Parijáta), 5, 9.
Káma (Káma-deva), 51, 74, 180.
Káma-dhenu (Surabhi), 5, 13, 87.
Kapila, 82.
Kardama, 82.
Kártikeya, 63.
Karm-nása, 5, 6.
Kási (Benares), 6, 15, 24, 33, 70.
Kasyapa, 73, 107.
Kausalyá, 14, 73, 107—116, 192.
Kayádhu, 49.
Kekaya, 86.
Khar, 12, 98.
Kishkindya, 20.
Kosala (Avadh), 107, 114.
Krishna, 54
Kulisa-radd, 100.
Kumbha-karan, 5, 73, 98.
Kumukh, 100.
Kusa-ketu (Kusa-dhwaja), 180, 189.
Kusika, 122, 151.
Kuver, 4.

Lakshman (Lachhman), 14, 16, 30, 37, 113, 180, &c.
Lakshmi (Srí, Ramá).
Lanká, 20, 99.
Lomas, 71.

Magadha (Bihár), 6.
Mahishásur, 4, 34.
Maina, 44, 58, 179.
Málwa, 6.
Mandákini, 24.
Mándavi, 180.
Mandara, 5.
Manu, 81—86.
Márícha, 19, 35, 117, 119, 198.
Márkandeya, 46.
Márwár, 6.
Megh-nád, 100.
Mekal, 24.
Mithilá, 122.
Múrdhanyá, 46.

Naimisha, 82.
Nala, 103.
Nárad, 3, 15, 16, 20, 43, 45, 49, 59, 73, 101, 185.
Nimi, 129.

Pampa-pur, 102
Párvati, styled also Ambiká, Bhawáni, Devi, Durga, Gauri, Girijá, Sati, Umá.

Parasurám (Bhrigu-náth, Bhrigu-pati), 30, 149-187.
Pívari, 46.
Prahlád, 20, 22, 72.
Pradyumna, 54.
Prán-náth 24,
Pratáp-bhánu, 87-97.
Prayág, 3, 32.
Prithu-ráj, 5.
Priya-vratá, 82.
Pulastya, 98, 103.

RÁHU, 7, 95, 134.
Ráma, styled also Kharári, Raghu-bar, Raghu-bír, Raghu-náyak, Raghu-náth, Raghu-pati, Raghu-ráj, Raghu-rái.
Rambhá, 74, 103.
Rati, 54. 180.
Rávan, 7, 20, 73, 97-106.
Renuká, 150.

SAHASRA-BAHU (Sahasra-bhuj), 102, 150, 153.
Sampáti, 55.
Sarju, 13, 29, 30.
Satánand, 134, 146, 185.
Satarupa, 81-86.
Satrughna, (Ripu-súdan), 14, 113, 180.
Satya-ketu, 86, 92.
Sila-nidhí, 76.
Síta (Jánaki), 104, 128, &c.
Siva, styled also Sankara, Sambhu, Mahádeva, Hara, Níl-kanth, Bhava, Tripurári, Purári, Visva-ketu, Visva-náth.
Sringi, 108.
Sruti-kírti, 180
Subáhu, 117, 119, 198.
Sugríva, 19, 20, 23.
Suka-deva, 15, 20.
Sukar-khet (Soron), 23.
Suketu, 19.
Sukra, 87.
Sumitrá, 14, 109, 193.
Sunayaná, 179.
Surpa-nakha, 98.

TÁDAKA, 19, 119, 198.
Táraka, 51, 63.

URMILÁ, 180.
Urvasí, 103.
Uttána-páda, 20, 82.

VÁLMÍKI, 1, 3, 16, 185.
Váma-deva, 185, 199, 200.
Váruni, 5.
Vasishta, 108, 110, 180, 195, 199.
Vásuki, 5.
Vedasiras, 46.
Vibhíshana, 19, 20, 23, 98.
Videha (Mithilá), 14, 121.
Vinatá, 148.
Vindhyáchal, 88.
Vishnu, styled also Hari, Mádhava, Mukund, Náráyan, Ramá-pati.
Visva-mitra, 19, 117, 122, 142, 185, 199.
Visva-mohani, 76.
Visravas, 98, 103.
Vyása, 11.

YÁJNA-VALKYA, 23, 32, 33.

# INTRODUCTION.

THE Sanskrit Rámáyana of Válmíki has been published more than once, with all the advantages of European editorial skill and the most luxurious typography. It has also been translated both in verse and prose, and, in part at least, into Latin as well as into Italian, French, and English. The more popular Hindi version of the same great national Epic can only be read in lithograph or bazar print,[1] and has never been translated in any form into any language whatever. Yet it is no unworthy rival of its more fortunate predecessor. There can, of course, be no comparison between the polished phraseology of classical Sanskrit and the rough colloquial idiom of Tulsi Dás's vernacular; while the antiquity of Válmíki's poem further invests it with an adventitious interest for the student of Indian history. But, on the other hand, the Hindi poem is the best and most trustworthy guide to the popular living faith of the Hindú race at the present day—a matter of not less practical interest than the creed of their remote ancestors,—and its language, which in the course of three centuries has contracted a tinge of archaism, is a study of the greatest importance to the philologist, since it serves to bridge an otherwise impassable chasm between the modern style and the mediæval. It is also less wordy and diffuse than the Sanskrit original, and, probably in consequence of its modern date, is less disfigured by wearisome interpolations and repetitions; while, if it never soars so high as Válmíki in some of his best passages, it maintains a more equable level of poetic diction, and seldom sinks with him into such dreary depths of unmitigated prose. It must also be noted that it is in no sense a translation of the earlier work: the general plan and the management of the incidents are necessarily much the same, but there is a difference in the touch in every detail;

[1] A handsome edition of the text was issued from the press of the Baptist Mission in Calcutta many years ago; but it has long been out of print, and the only copy I have ever seen of it was the one in use at the college of Fort William. I had thus entirely forgotten the fact till reminded of it by Mr. Bate, a gentleman who has ably maintained the scholarly reputation of the same society by the very useful Hindi Dictionary that he has lately compiled.

and the two poems vary as widely as any two dramas on the same mythological subject by two different Greek tragedians. Even the coincidence of name is an accident; for Tulsi Dás himself called his poem "the Rám-charit-mánas," and the shorter name, corresponding in form to "the Iliad" or "Æneid," was only substituted by his admirers as a handier designation for a popular favourite.

However, the opinion that the more modern poem is but an adaptation or *rifaccimento* of the Sanskrit original is very widely entertained not only by European scholars but also by Hindús themselves. For among the latter an orthodox pandit is essentially *homo unius libri*, to whom the idea of comparative criticism is altogether strange and unintelligible. Whatever is written in the one book to which he pins his faith is for him the absolute truth, which he positively declines to weaken or obscure by a reference to any foreign authority. If he can understand Válmíki's Sanskrit he despises Tulsi Dás as a vulgarian, and would not condescend to read a line of him; if he knows only Hindi, he accepts the modern poem with as implicit faith as if it were an immemorial shástra, and accounts a quotation from his Rámáyana an unanswerable argument on any disputed topic. Thus, in all probability, the only educated Hindús who have any acquaintance with both poems are the professors and students of Government colleges, whose views have been broadened by European influences. It may, therefore, be of interest to show a little more at length how great is the divergence between the two poems.

In both the first book brings the narrative precisely to the same point, *viz.*, the marriage of Ráma and Síta. But with Tulsi Dás it is much the longest book of the seven, and forms all but a third of the complete work, while in the Sanskrit it is the shortest but one. In the latter the four first cantos, which give a table of contents, and relate how Válmíki learnt the story from Nárad, and taught it to Kusa and Lava, are a late addition, and correspond in no respect with Tulsi Dás's introduction. The actual poem commences at once with a description of Ayodhyá and its King Dasarath and his ministers, and of his longing for an heir; and tells how Rishyasring, Vibhandak's son (whose previous adventures are recorded at length), was invited from the palace of his father-in-law, Lomapád, the King of Champá,

to direct the ceremonies of a great sacrifice which the childless Dasarath resolved to celebrate in the hope of thereby obtaining his desire. The gods, being at that time sorely distressed by Rávan's persecution, had fled to Vishnu for succour; and he in answer to their prayer became incarnate in the four sons that were born to the king, while the inferior divinities took birth as bears and monkeys. The four princes are named by Vasishta. They grow up, and the king is thinking where to find suitable brides for them, when Visvamitra comes, and after a long colloquy takes away with him Ráma and Lakshman to protect him at the time of sacrifice from the demons that persistently assail him. On the way they pass by the Anga hermitage, where the god of love had been reduced to ashes by Siva—a legend to which very brief allusion is made,—then through the forest of Táraká, whom Ráma meets in battle and slays, after her genealogy has been given in full. He is then invested by the saint with certain heavenly weapons and magical powers, and, arriving at Visvamitra's hermitage, he slays the demons Maricha and Subáhu. Being told of Janak's bow-sacrifice, he resolves to attend it; and as he crosses the Son and the Ganges on his way thither, Visvamitra details at length his own descent from King Kusa, the birth of Gangá, the legend of the sons of Ságar and his sacrifice, and how his descendant Bhagirath brought down the Ganges from heaven, and the genealogy of the kings of Visála. As they draw near to Mithilá, Ráma delivers Gautam's wife, Ahalyá, whose legend is given in full. He is welcomed by Janak and Ahalyá's son, Satánanda, and the latter relates the complete history of the contention between Visvamitra and Vasishta, of Trisanku and Sunahsepha and Ambarísha, and of Visvamitra's final promotion to Bráhmanical rank,—his speech occupying eight hundred lines. Janak shows Ráma the bow in its case, and he then and there takes it up and snaps it in pieces. The royal suitors had all tried in vain, and after fruitlessly besieging the city, with intent to carry off Sita by force, had returned discomforted to their own realms. Envoys are despatched to Ayodhyá for King Dasarath; Kusadhwaj, Janak's brother, is also summoned from Sankasya; and then in full conclave Vasishta declares Ráma's pedigree, and then Janak his own. The fourfold nuptials then take place, a hundred thousand cows being given to the Bráhmans in the name of each of the brides, and many precious gifts being bestowed

in dowry. Dasarath then takes his way home with his sons and daughters, but is met by Parasurám with Vishnu's bow, which Ráma strings at once, and the son of Bhrigu acknowledges his supremacy. They then reach Ayodhyá, whence Bharat soon departs with his uncle, Yudhajit, on a visit to his mother's father, Kekaya.

On comparing the above sketch with the following translation of the corresponding portion of the Hindi poem it will be seen that the two agree only in the broadest outline. The episodes so freely introduced by both poets are for the most part entirely dissimilar; and even in the main narrative some of the most important incidents, such as the breaking of the bow and the contention with Parasurám, are differently placed, and assume a very altered complexion. In other passages, where the story follows the same lines, whatever Válmíki has condensed, as, for example, the description of the marriage festivities, Tulsi Dás has expanded; and wherever the elder poet has lingered longest, his successor has hastened on most rapidly.

The earliest notice of our author, as indeed of all the other celebrated Vaishnava writers who flourished about the same period, *viz.*, the 16th and 17th century A.D., is to be found in the Bhakt-Málá, or 'Legends of the Saints,' one of the most difficult works in the Hindi language. Its composition is invariably ascribed to Nábhá Jí, himself one of the leaders of the reform, which had its centre at Brindában; but the poem, as we now have it, was avowedly edited, if not entirely written, by one of his disciples named Naráyan Dás, who lived during the reign of Shahjahán. A single stanza is all that is ordinarily devoted to each personage, who is panegyrized with reference to his most salient characteristics in a style that might be described as of unparalleled obscurity, were it not that each such separate portion of the text is followed by a *tika*, or gloss, written by one Priya Dás in the *Sambat* year 1769 (1713 A.D.), in which confusion is still worse confounded by a series of the most disjointed and inexplicit allusions to different legendary events in the saint's life. The poem has never been printed, and though it is of the very highest repute among modern Vaishnavas, and is therefore not rare in MS. either at Mathurá or Brindaban, it is utterly unintelligible to ordinary native readers. The text of the

passage referring to Tulsi Dás is therefore here given, and is followed by a literal English translation :—

॥ मूल ॥

कलि कुटिल जीव निस्तार हेत बाल्मीक तुलसी भयो ॥
चेता काव्य निबंध करिब सत कोटि रामायण ॥
इक अच्छर उद्धरै ब्रह्महत्यादि करी जिनि हेात पारायन ॥
अब भक्तनि सुख दैन बहुरि वपु धरि लीला बिस्तारी ॥
राम चरन रसमत्त रटत अह निसि ब्रत धारी ॥
संसार अपार के पार को सुगम रूप नौका लियो ॥
कलि कुटिल जीव निस्तार हेत बालमीक तुलसी भयो ॥

*Translation of the text of Nábhá Jí.*

For the redemption of mankind in this perverse Kali Yug, Válmíki has been born again as Tulsi. The verses of the Rámáyana composed in the Treta Yug are a hundred crores in number; but a single letter has redeeming power, and would work the salvation of one who had even committed the murder of a Bráhman. Now again as a blessing to the faithful has he taken birth and published the sportive actions of the god. Intoxicated with his passion for Ráma's feet, he perseveres day and night in the accomplishment of his vow, and has supplied as it were a boat for the easy passage of the boundless ocean of existence. For the redemption of man in this perverse Kali Yug, Válmíki has been born again as Tulsi.

॥ टीका ॥

तिया सों सनेह बिन पूछैं पिता गेह गई
भूली सुधि देह भजे वाही ठौर आए हैं ॥
बधू अति लाज भई रिसि सों निकसि गई
प्रीति राम नई तन हाड़ चाम छाए हैं ॥
सुनी जब बात मानों होय गयो प्रात वह
पाछे पछितात तजी कासी पुरी धाए हैं ॥
कियो तहां बास प्रभु सेवा लै प्रकास
कीनों दृढ़ भाव नैन रूप के तिसाए हैं ॥
सींच जल सेस पाय भूतहू बिसेस कोऊ
बोल्यो सुख मानि हनूमान जू बताए हैं ॥

रामायन कथा सो रसायन है काननि कों
आवत प्रथम पाछैं जात घृना छाए हैं ॥
जाय पहिचान संग चले उर आनि आए
बन मधि जानि धाय पाय लपटाए हैं ॥
करैं सीतकार कहि सकोगे न टारि में तो
जाने रससार रूप धर्‌यो जैसे गाये हैं ॥
मांगि लीजे बर कहि दीजे राम भूप रूप
अतिहो अनूप नित्त नैंन अभिलाखिये ॥
कियो लै संकेत बाही दिन ही सों लाग्यो हेत
आई सोई समै चेत कब छबि चाखिये ॥
आये रघुनाथ साथ लछमन चढ़े घोरे
पट रंग बोरे हरैं कैसे मन राखिये ॥
पाछैं हनूमान आय बोले देखे प्रान प्यारे
नेकुन निहारे मैं तो भले फेरि भाखिये ॥
हत्या करि बिप्र एक तीरथ करत आयो
कहै मुख राम भिक्षा डारिये हत्यारे कों ॥
सुनि अभिराम नाम धाम में बुलाय लियो
दियो लै प्रसाद कियो सुद्ध गायो प्यारे कों ॥
भई द्विजसभा कहि बोलि कै पठाए आप
कैसें गये पाप संग लैके जैये न्यारे कों ॥
पोथी तुम बांचो हिये सार नहीं सांचो अजू
तातें मत काचो दूर करे न अंध्यारे कों ॥
देखी पोथी बांच नाम महिमाहू कही सांच
अेप हत्या करै कैसे तरे कहि दीजिये ॥
आवै जो प्रतीत कहो कही या के हाथ जेवैं
सिव जू को वैल तब पंगति में लीजिये ॥
थार में प्रसाद दियो चले जहा पन कियो
बोले आप नाम के प्रताप मति भीजिये ॥

जैसी तुम जानों तैसी कैसें कै बखानों अहो
सुनिकै प्रसन्न पायो जै जै धुनि रीजिये ॥
आये निसि चोर चोरी करन हरन धन
देखे स्यामघन हाथ चाप सर लिये हैं ॥
जब जब आबे बान सांधि डर पावै बे तो
अति मंडरावै अपैं बली दूरें किये हैं ॥
भोर आय पूछैं अजू सांवरों किसोर कोन
सुनि करि मौन रहे आंसू डारि दिये हैं ॥
दई सबै लुटाय जानी चौकी रामराय दई
लई उन्हें दीछा सीछा सुद्ध भये हिये हैं ॥
कियो तन विप्र त्याग लागि चली संग तिया
दूरहीं तें देखि किया चरन प्रनाम है ॥
बोले यों सुहागवती मरस्यौ पति होउ सती
अब तो निकस गई ज्याऊं सेवो राम है ॥
बोलिके कुटंब कही जो पै भक्ति करो सही
गही तब बात जीव दियो अभिराम है ॥
भये सब साधु ब्याधि मेटी लै बिमुख ताकी
जाकी बास रहै तो न सूझै स्याम धाम है ॥
दिल्लीपति पातिसाह अहदी पठायो लैन
ताकों सो सुनायो सूवे विप्र ज्यायो जानियें ॥
देखिवे की चाहै नीकैं सुख सों निबाहैं आप
कहि बहु बिनय गहि चले मन आनियें ॥
पहुंचे नृपति पास आदर प्रकास कियो
उच्च आसन लै बोल्यो मृदु बानियें ॥
दीजै करामाति जग ख्याति सब मात किये
कही झूठ बात एक राम पहिचानिये ॥
देखैं राम कैसो कहि कैदि किये किये हियें
हूजिये कृपाल हनूमान जू दयाल हो ॥

ताही समै फैलि गए कोटि कोटि कपि नये
लोचैं तन खैंचैं चीर भयो यों बिहाल हो ॥
फोरें कोट मारें चोट किये डारें लोट पोट
लीजे कोन ओट जानि मानो प्रले काल हो ॥
भई तब आंखैं दुखसागर को चाखैं अब
वेई हमैं राखैं भाखैं वारों धन माल हो ॥
आय पाय लिये तुम दिये हम प्रान पावें
आप समझावें करामात नेकु लिजिये ॥
लाज दबि गयो नृप तब राखि लियो कह्या
भयो घर राम जू को बेगि छोड़ि दीजिये ॥
सुनि तजि दियो और कस्यो लेके कोट नयो
अबहू न रहै कोऊ वामैं तन छीजिये ॥
कासो जाय वृन्दाबन आय मिले नाभाजू सों
सुन्यो हो कबित निज रीझि मति भीजिये ॥
मदन गोपाल जू को दरसन करि कहि
सही राम इष्ट मेरे दृष्टि भाव पागी है ॥
वैसोई सरूप कियो दियो लै दिखाय रूप
मन अनरूप छबि देखि नीकी लागी है ॥
कांहू कही कृष्ण अवतारी जू प्रसंस महा
राम अंस सुन बोले मति अनुरागी है ॥
दसरथसुत जानो सुंदर अनूप मानों
ईसता बताई रति बीस गुनी जागी है ॥

*Translation of the gloss (or supplement) by Priya Dás.*

He had great love for his wife: without asking his leave she went home to her father's; he forgot all about himself and hastened there too. She was greatly ashamed, and went away in anger, saying: "Have you no love for Rámа? My body is but a framework of skin and bone." When he heard these words it was as it were the daybreak; he felt compunction and left her and sped to the city of Kási. There he made his abode, worshipping the lord publicly, making a rigid vow, and thirsting exceedingly for a vision.

A certain ghost, who had secured the remainder of the water he had used in washing,[1] was grateful and told him of Hanumán. "A recitation of the Rámáyana has a special charm for his ears; disguised in unseemly attire, he is the first to come and the last to leave." Recognizing him as he left, he went with him in full confidence, and in the wood, knowing it to be the god of a truth, ran and embraced his feet, crying with a shout of joy: "You shall not escape me: I know you to be the soul of melody." Then he assumed the form in which he is famous and said: "Ask of me what you will." "I am ever craving to behold with my very eyes the incomparable beauty of King Ráma." He told him the place for meeting. From that day forth he was longing till the time came, thinking: When shall I behold his beauty? Raghunáth came, and with him Lachhman, both mounted on horseback, in green raiment (like huntsmen). Why should he notice them? Afterwards came Hanumán and said: "Have you seen your dear lord?" "I did not give them even a glance; turn now and speak to them again."

A Bráhman, who had committed a murder, came on a pilgrimage, crying "For the love of Ráma give an alms even to me, a murderer." On hearing the delightful name, he called him into his own house, and gave him of the offerings to the god, and purified him and sang the praises of his Beloved. The Bráhmans met in conclave and summoned him before them, saying "How has his guilt been remitted that you could thus take and eat with him apart?" "Read your books; their real meaning has not penetrated your heart; therefore your faith is dull and your blindness has not been removed." "We have read and examined our books; the virtue of the Name is truly as you have said; but can a murderer be absolved? Please explain that." "Tell me how I may convince you," They said, "If Siva's bull will eat from his hand, then will we receive him into our company." He took some of the temple offerings in a dish and prayed: "May all souls be filled with the glory of thy name: how can I declare the extent of thy knowledge?" On hearing those words he graciously accepted the offering: there was a joyous shout of Victory, Victory.

Some thieves came by night to thieve and plunder his goods: but beheld a cloud-dark form with bow and arrows in his hand. Whenever he approached with ready shaft, they were afraid; and though they went round and round, they could not get rid of this watchman. At daybreak they came and asked him: "Sir, who is this dark-complexioned lad of yours?" On hearing this question, he remained silent and wept; then gave away all that he had, knowing that Ráma himself had been the watchman. They were initiated and received instruction, and became pure of heart.

A Bráhman had died; his wife was following him to the pyre. She saw him at a distance and made him obeisance. He addressed her as a happy wife. She replied, "My husband is dead, and I am about to perish with him." "The word has passed my lips; I will restore him to life; worship thou Ráma." Then he called her kinsfolk and said, "But you must adopt a religious life." They hearkened to his word, and he restored the man to the delights of life. They all became saints, when he had taken away their sinful frowardness: none can see heaven in whom passion still lives.

[1] A ghost is supposed to suffer from perpetual thirst and to be glad to secure even a drop of water, however impure the purpose for which it has been used.

The Emperor of Delhi sent an officer to fetch him, explaining "It is he, you must know, who brought the Bráhman to life again." "He is anxious to see you," they said, "so come; all will be well." They spoke so courteously that he agreed and went. They arrived before the king, who received him with honour, gave him an exalted seat, and said in gracious tones: "Let me see a miracle; it is noised throughout the world that you are master of everything." He said: "It is false; know that Ráma is all in all." "How is Ráma to be seen?" he said, and threw him into prison. He prayed within himself: "O gracious Hanumán, have pity upon me." That very moment thousands upon thousands of sturdy monkeys spread all over the place, clawing bodies, tearing clothes, and great was the alarm. They broke open the fort, wounding the men, destroying everything; where could one fly for safety? it seemed as though the end of the world had come. Then his eyes were opened by this taste of a sea of calamities, and he cried, "Now I wager all my treasure it is he only who can save me." He came and clasped his feet: "If you give me life, I live; pray speak to them." "Better watch the miracle a little." The king was overwhelmed with confusion. Then he stopt it all and said: "Quickly abandon this spot, for it is the abode of Ráma." At the word he quitted the place and went and built a new fort, and to this day no one lives there, but he wastes away.

After returning to Kási he came to Brindabán and met Nábhá Jí, and heard his poetry, and his whole soul was filled with delight. On visiting the shrine of Madan Gopál he said "Of a truth Ráma is my special patron; I would fain see him." Then appeared the god to him in that very form; and he was glad on beholding his incomparable beauty. It was said to him "The Krishna Avatár is of greatest renown; Ráma was only a partial incarnation." On hearing this he said: "My soul was full of love for him when I took him only for the son of Dasarath and admired his incomparable beauty; now you tell me of his divinity, my love is increased twenty-fold."

Professor Wilson, in his most valuable and interesting "Essay on the Religious Sects of the Hindús," gives the following notice of Tulsi Dás, and adds that he had derived it from the Bhakt-Málá:— "Having been incited to the peculiar adoration of Ráma by the remonstrances of his wife, to whom he was passionately attached, he adopted a vagrant life, visited Benares, and afterwards went to Chitrakút, where he had a personal interview with Hanumán, from whom he received his poetical inspiration and the power of working miracles. His fame reached Delhi, where Shahjahán was emperor. The monarch sent for him to produce the person of Ráma, which Tulsi Dás refusing to do, the king threw him into confinement. The people of the vicinity, however, speedily petitioned for his liberation, as they were alarmed for their own security; myriads of monkeys having collected about the prison, and begun to demolish it and the adjacent buildings. Shahjahán set the poet at

liberty, and desired him to solicit some favour as a reparation for the indignity he had suffered. Tulsi Dás accordingly requested him to quit ancient Delhi, which was the abode of Ráma; and in compliance with this request the emperor left it and founded the new city, thence named Sháhjahánábád. After this Tulsi Dás went to Brindában, where he had an interview with Nábhá Jí; he settled there and strenuously advocated the worship of Sítá Ráma, in preference to that of Rádhá Krishan."

On comparing this sketch with the literal translation of the text from which it is professedly derived, it will be seen that it is not very closely in accord with it. It omits many particulars and adds others, and was probably taken, not from the genuine Hindi poem itself, but from some modern prose adaptation,[1] of which, in consequence of the difficulty of the original, there are very many in existence. It is a curious illustration of the indifference to historical truth and the love for the marvellous, by which the Hindú mind has always been characterized, that although the *tíka* even of the Bhakt-Málá was written less than a century after the poet's death, it still gives so little trustworthy information about the real incidents of his life, and supplies so much that is clearly fictitious. That it was his wife who first persuaded him to exchange an earthly for a divine love and to devote himself to the service of Ráma may well be accepted as a fact: and the other legends—of the ghost who introduced him to Hanumán, through whom he obtained a vision of Ráma and Lakshman; of the murderer whom he recognized as cleansed of his crime by the repetition of the holy name of Ráma; of the widow on her way to the funeral pile, whose husband he restored to life; of the emperor's requiring him to perform some miracle and, on his refusal to produce the god to whom he ascribed all his power, throwing him into prison, from which he was delivered by Hanumán's monkey host, and of the emperor's thereupon

[1] I have now been able to verify this conjecture, as Mr. Leonard, the Assistant Secretary of the Calcutta Asiatic Society, has been kind enough to lend me his copy of Price's Hindi and Hindustáni Selections, a work to which Professor Wilson refers more than once in the course of his essay. It was published in Calcutta in 1827, and has long been out of print. I find that as many as 50 pages of it are occupied with extracts from the Bhakt-Málá; but with the exception of some 18 stanzas from the *múl* of Nábhá Jí, all the rest is in simple narrative prose; and the compiler in his introduction specially mentions that the work itself was rarely to be met with in the lower provinces, and that his extracts were taken from a copy in Mr. Wilson's library.

abandoning a spot which Ráma had made so peculiarly his own ; of the thieves who were prevented from breaking into the poet's house by Ráma himself acting as watchman ; of his visit to Brindában and his interview with Nábhá Jí, and of his persistence in preferring the worship of Ráma to that of Krishna, though the latter god assured him in person that there was no difference between the two—all these legends, as given in the Bhakt-Málá, whatever their foundation, are still popularly accepted as verities, and are indissolubly connected with the poet's name. A few further facts of more prosaic character may be gathered from his own works and from tradition: thus we learn from the introduction to the Rámáyana that he commenced its composition at Ayodhyá in the *Sambat* year 1631, corresponding to 1575 A.D., and that he had studied for some length of time at Soron. He was by descent a Bráhman of the Kanaujiyá clan, and in the Bhakt-Sindhu—a modern poem of no great authority, the writer when at a loss for facts being, as it seems, in the habit of supplying them out of his own imagination—it is stated that his father's name was Atmá Rám, and that he was born at Hastinapur. Others make Hájipur, near Chitrakút, the place of his birth. The greater part of his life was certainly spent at Benares, though he also passed some years in visits to Soron, Ayodhya, Chitrakút, Alláhabad, and Brindában. He died in the *Sambat* year 1680 (1624 A.D.) Two copies of the Rámáyana in his own handwriting are said to be still in existence, the one being preserved at Rájapur, and the other in the temple of Sítá Ráma, which he himself founded, at Benares. The MS., however, is regarded as a fetish and not allowed to be handled. In addition to this his great work he composed at least six other poems, all of them having the one object of popularizing the cultus of his tutelary divinity. They are the Rámgítávali, Dohávali, the Kabitsambandh, the Binay Patriká, the Pad Rámáyana, and the Chhandávali. Of these the Rámgítávali is a text-book in the Government examination for a degree of honour in Hindi, though it exists only in MS., which is also the case with all the others, excepting the Binay Patriká, which was printed in good type by Srí Lallú Jí for the use of the college of Fort William in the year 1826 ; but copies of this edition are now very scarce. The list is not unfrequently extended by the addition of the following minor works, as to the genuineness of which there is

considerable doubt, *viz.*, the Rám-Saláká, the Hanumán Báhuka, the Jánaki Mangal, the Párvati Mangal, the Karká Chhand, the Rorá Chhand, and the Jhulná Chhand.

The introductory portion of the first book of the Rámáyana is not only interesting as a resumé of popular Hindú theology and metaphysics, but is also curious as containing the author's vindication of himself against his critics. They attacked him for lowering the dignity of his subject by clothing it in the vulgar vernacular. However just his defence may be, it did not succeed in converting the opposite faction; and the professional Sanskrit pandits, who are their modern representatives, still affect to despise his work as an unworthy concession to the illiterate masses. With this small and solitary exception the book is in every one's hands, from the court to the cottage, and is read, or heard, and appreciated alike by every class of the Hindú community, whether high or low, rich or poor, young or old. The purity of its moral sentiments and the absolute avoidance of the slightest approach to any pruriency of idea—which the author justly advances among his distinctive merits—render it a singularly unexceptionable text-book for native boys. For several years past I have persistently urged its adoption upon the Education Department, and—thanks to Rájá Siva Prasád—extracts from it have now been introduced into our primary schools. It has always been prescribed as the principal test in the civil examination for high proficiency and a degree of honour; and it is equally well adapted for both these apparently incongruous purposes. For a Hindú child generally grasps at once the familiar idiom, and finds no great difficulty in even the most crabbed passage; while on the other hand both the terminology and the syntactic collocation of the words are in the highest degree perplexing to the European student. The reason is, that an English official as a rule knows only the language of the courts, and has never studied the vernacular of the people: for which neglect he has hitherto had much excuse in the absence both of a dictionary and a grammar. The latter want has within the last year been most admirably supplied by Mr. Kellogg, of the Alláhabad American Presbyterian Mission, in a work that leaves nothing to be desired, and is in a remarkable degree both lucid and exhaustive: while Dr. Fallon's dictionary, now in course

of publication, though it contains much that might well have been omitted, will probably comprise fairly adequate explanations of all the words in Tulsi Dás's vocabulary. Mr. Bate's dictionary also, though scarcely intended for very advanced students, will be of much use to beginners, since it gives in alphabetical order all the archaic forms of inflection, which at the outset are found so perplexing. It will, I think, be admitted that a poem of such manifold interest should no longer be withheld from the English reader; and I had hoped that either Mr. Kellogg himself, or some of the very able scholars, his colleagues, might be induced to supply a want they unanimously deplore; but they plead the length of the work and their own little leisure as an excuse. At last, after ascertaining that there is no prospect of my hope being realized by their labours, I have myself commenced a translation, and by the favour of the local Government am now enabled to publish the first book as a specimen of the whole.

As a result of the fact that no translation has ever before been attempted, it is absolutely unavoidable but that there should be a number of errors and oversights in my performance, and the more so since it has been executed amidst a variety of distractions. A considerable portion of it was written in camp, when I had few books of reference at hand, and the remainder during the midday heat of the summer months in the plains, when the intellectual faculties are apt to become a little torpid. My practice has been to work entirely alone, but to mark any lines, the interpretation of which struck me as at all doubtful, and to refer them from time to time to Pandit Benche Lál, a Sárasvat Bráhman of Mainpuri, and now the head teacher in the branch school in the city of Mathurá, who has a wider acquaintance with early and mediæval Hindi literature than any one I have met since I have been in the country. It is probable therefore that such errors as may be detected will be found in the easier rather than in the more difficult passages, and will readily admit of correction. I have also consulted throughout a carefully compiled Hindi commentary on the poem published under the auspices of the present Mahárájá of Benares, who was kind enough to send me a copy of it, and which I have found exceedingly useful. I would further thank Pandit Bihári Chaube of

the Benares College for some valuable emendations of my rendering of several lines in the introductory portion of the poem, which first appeared in the Journal of the Calcutta Asiatic Society; and I hope that others of his learned countrymen will favour me with any suggestions that occur to them, in order that the English version of their great national Epic may ultimately be rendered as accurate as possible.

F. S. GROWSE.

MATHURÁ:
*October* 20, 1876.

# THE RÁMÁYANA

OF

# TULSI DÁS.

## BOOK I.

## CHILDHOOD.

*Sanskrit Invocation.*

I REVERENCE the goddess of speech and the divine guide,[1] who are the inventors of the alphabet; of multiform expression; of the poetic modes and of metre. I reverence Bhaváni and Sankara, the incarnation of faith and hope, without whom not even the just can see GOD, the Great Spirit. I reverence as the incarnation of Sankara the all-wise Guru, through whom even the crescent moon is everywhere honoured.[2] I reverence the king of bards[3] and the monkey king, of pure intelligence, who ever lingered with delight in the holy forest land of Ráma and Sítá's infinite perfection. I bow before Sítá, the beloved of Ráma; the queen of birth, of life and death; the destroyer of sorrow; the cause of happiness. I reverence, under his name of Ráma, the lord Hari; supreme over all causes; to whose illusive power are subject the whole universe and every supernatural being from Bráhma downwards; by whose light truth is made manifest, as when what appeared to be a snake turns out a rope; and by whose feet as by a bark those who will may pass safely over the ocean of existence. In accord with all the Puránas and different sacred texts, and with what has been recorded in the Rámáyana (of Válmíki) and elsewhere, I, Tulsi, to gratify my own heart's desire, have composed these lays of Raghunáth in most choice and elegant modern speech.

[1]By *Váni*, the goddess of speech, and *Vináyaka*, the guide, are certainly intended the divinities ordinarily so designated, viz. Sarasvati and Ganesa. The translation, however, leaves it open; since some of the Hindú commentators conceive that in this particular passage the reference is rather to Sítá and Lakshman.

[2]The crescent moon, being one of Sankara's (*i.e.*, Siva's) constant symbols, is honoured on his account, though in itself imperfect; while the full moon is honoured for its own sake.

[3]The king of bards is Válmíki, the reputed author of the Sanskrit Rámáyana. The monkey king is of course Hanumán, and the two are brought together more on account of the close similarity of name than for any other reason, *Kavíswara* and *Kapíswara* differing only by a single letter.

*Soratha* 1.

O Ganes of the grand elephant head, the mention of whose name ensures success, be gracious to me, accumulation of wisdom, storehouse of all good qualities! Thou, too, by whose favour the dumb becomes eloquent and the lame can climb the vastest mountain, be favourable to me, O thou that consumest as a fire all the impurities of this iron age. Take up thy abode also in my heart, O thou that slumberest on the milky ocean, with body dark as the lotus, and eyes bright as a budding water-lily. O spouse of Umá, clear of hue as the jasmine or the moon; home of compassion, who showest pity to the humble; show pity upon me, O destroyer of Kámadeva. I reverence the lotus feet of my master, that ocean of benevolence, Hari incarnate, whose words are like a flood of sunlight on the darkness of ignorance and infatuation.[1]

*Chaupái.*

I reverence the pollen-like dust of the lotus feet of my master, bright, fragrant, sweet, and delicious; pure extract of the root of ambrosia, potent to disperse all the attendant ills of life; like the holy ashes on the divine body of Sambhu, beautiful, auspicious, ecstatic. Applied to the forehead as a *tilak*, it cleanses from defilement the fair mirror of the human mind and enriches it with all the virtues of the master. By recalling the lustre of the nails of the reverend guru's feet, a divine splendour illumines the soul, dispersing the shades of error with its sun-like glory. How blessed he who takes it to his heart! The mental vision brightens and expands, the night of the world with its sin and pain fades away; the actions of Ráma,[2] like diamonds and rubies, whether obvious or obscure, all alike become clear, in whichever direction the mine is explored.

*Dohá* 1.

By applying this collyrium as it were to the eyes the student acquires both holiness and wisdom, and is able to understand his sportive career when on earth, on mountain, or in forest, and all the treasures of his grace.

[1]The persons addressed in this stanza are Ganes, Sarasvati, Náráyan, and the poet's own spiritual instructor, or guru.

[2]The simple actions are compared to rubies, which may be picked up on the surface of the ground; the mysterious actions to diamonds, which have to be dug out of a mine.

*Chaupái.*

The dust of the guru's feet is a soft and charming collyrium, like ambrosia for the eyes, to remove every defect of vision. With this having purified the eyes of my understanding, I proceed to relate the actions of Ráma, the redeemer of the world. First I reverence the feet of the great Bráhman saints, potent to remove the doubts engendered by error. In my heart, as with my voice, I reverence the whole body of the faithful, mines of perfection; whose good deeds resemble the fruit of the cotton plant in austerity, purity, and manifold uses, and in painful cleansing from impurities: reverence to them, whatever the age or clime in which their glory was consummated. An assembly of the saints is all joy and felicity, like the great *tirath* Prayág endowed with motion; for faith in Ráma is as the stream of the Ganges; contemplation on Bráhma as the Sarasvati; and ritual, dealing with precepts and prohibitions for the purification of this iron age, as the sun-god's daughter, the Jamuná. The united flood of the Tribeni is represented by the legends of Hari and of Hara, filling all that hear with delight: the sacred fig-tree by faith firm in its own traditions, and Prayág itself by the assembly of the virtuous. Easy of access to all, on any day, at any place, curing all the ills of pious devotees, is this unspeakable, spiritual chief *tirath*, of manifest virtue and yielding immediate fruit.

*Dohá* 2.

At this Prayág of holy men, whoever hears and understands, and in spirit devoutly bathes, receives even in this life all four rewards.[1]

*Chaupái.*

In an instant behold the result of the immersion; the crow becomes a parrot and the goose a swan. Let no one marvel at hearing this, for the influence of good company is no mystery. Válmíki, Nárad, and the jar-born Agastya[2] have told its effect upon

[1]The four rewards are *káma*, *artha*, *dharma*, *moksha*; that is, pleasure, wealth, religious merit, and final salvation.

[2]Válmíki confessed to Ráma that he had once been a hunter and taken the life of many innocent creatures, till he fell in with the seven Rishis, who converted him and taught him to express his penitence by constantly repeating the word *mara*, *mara*. As this is 'Ráma' with its two syllables in inverted order, it acted as a spell and advanced him to the highest degree of sanctity.

Similarly Nárad confessed to Vyása, the author of the Puránas, that he was by birth only the son of a poor slave-girl, and had become a saint simply by

themselves. Whatever moves in the water, or on the earth, or in the air; every creature in the world, whether animate or inanimate, that has attained to knowledge, or glory, or salvation, or power, or virtue, by any work, at any time or place, has triumphed through association with the good; neither the world nor the Veda knows of any other expedient. Intercourse with the good is attainable only by the blessing of Ráma, and without it wisdom is impossible: it is the root of all joy and felicity; its flowers are good works and its fruit perfection. By it the wicked are reformed, as by the touch of the philosopher's stone a vile metal becomes gold. If by mischance a good man falls into evil company, like the jewel in a serpent's head, he still retains his character. Bráhma, Vishnu, Mahádeva, the wisest of the poets, all have failed to describe the supremacy of virtue; for me to tell it is as it were for a coster-monger to expatiate on the excellence of a set of jewels.

*Dohá* 3-4.

I reverence the saints of equable temperament, who regard neither friend nor foe; like a gracious flower which sheds its fragrance alike on both infolding hands.[1] Ye saints, whose upright intention, whose catholic charity, and whose ready sympathy I acknowledge, hear my child-like prayer, be gracious to me and inspire me with devotion to the feet of Ráma.

*Chaupái.*

Again, I would propitiate those saintly wretches[2] who without a cause swerve right or left; with whom a neighbour's loss is gain; who rejoice in desolation and weep over prosperity; who are as an eclipse to the full-moon glory of Hari and Hara; who become as a giant with a thousand arms to work another's woe; who have a thousand eyes to detect a neighbour's faults, but, like flies on *ghí*, settle on his good points only to spoil them; quick as fire, passionate as Mahishásur; rich in crime and sin as Kuver is in gold;

eating the fragments of food left by the holy men who frequented his master's house.

Agastya also declared to Mahádeva that by birth he was the meanest of all creatures, and had only attained to miraculous powers by the influence of good company.

[1]Though the right hand is the one by which it has been plucked, and the left that in which it is held and preserved.

[2]In the following lines the poet defends himself by anticipation against possible objections, and roundly abuses the whole army of critics.

like an eclipse for the clouding of friendship, and as dead asleep as Kumbha-karan[1] to everything good; if they can do any injury, as ready to sacrifice themselves as hailstones, that melt after destroying a crop; spiteful as the great serpent with a thousand tongues; and like Prithuráj,[2] with a thousand ears, to tell and hear of others' faults; like the thousand-eyed Indra, too, ever delighting in much strong drink and in a voice of thunder.

*Dohá* 5.

I know when they hear of philosophers, who regard friend and foe both as friends, they are enraged; but I clasp my hands and entreat them piteously.

*Chaupái.*

I have performed the rôle of supplication, nor will they forget their part. However carefully you may bring up a crow, it will still be a crow and a thief. I propitiate at once the feet of saints and sinners, who each give pain, but with a difference: for the first kill by absence, while the second torture by their presence: as opposite as a lotus and a leech, though both alike are produced in water. Good and bad thus resemble nectar and intoxicating drink, which were both begotten by the one great ocean:[3] each by its own acts attains to pre-eminence; the one in glory, the other in disgrace: compare with the good, ambrosia, or the moon, or the Ganges; and with the bad, poison, or fire, or the river Karmnásá. Virtue and vice are known to all; but whatever is to a man's taste, that seemeth him good.

[1]Rávan's gigantic brother, Kumbha-karan, obtained as a boon from Bráhma that whenever he had satisfied his voracious appetite the slumber of repletion might be of the longest and deepest, and that he might only wake to eat again.

[2]It is not related that Prithuráj had really ten thousand ears, but only that he prayed that he might be as quick to hear whatever redounded to the glory of God as if his ears were so many.

[3]The churning of the ocean is one of the commonplaces of Hindú poetry, and the allusions to it in the Rámáyana are innumerable. With Mount Mandara as a churning-stick, the great serpent Vásuki as a rope, and Náráyan himself in tortoise form as the pivot on which to work, the gods and demons combined to churn the milky ocean. Thus were produced from its depth the moon; the sacred cow, Surabhi or Káma-dhenu; the goddess of wine, Varuni; the tree of paradise, Párijáta, or Kalpa-taru; the heavenly nymphs, the Apsarás; the goddess of beauty, Lakhsmi or Sri; and the physician of the gods, Dhanvantarí. The cup of nectar which the latter held in his hand was seized and quaffed by the gods; while the poison, which also was produced, was either claimed by the snake gods or swallowed by Mahádeva; whence comes the blackness of his throat, that gives him the name of *Nil Kanth.*

*Dohá* 6.

The good take to goodness, and the vile to vileness: and ambrosia is praised by Immortality, and poison by Death.

*Chaupái.*

Why enumerate the faults and defects of the bad and the virtues of the good? both are a boundless and unfathomable ocean. Hence occasionally virtue is reckoned as vice, improperly and from want of discrimination. For God hath created both, but it is the Veda that has distinguished one from the other. The heroic legends and the Puránas also, no less than the Vedas, recognize every kind of good and evil as creatures of the Creator; pain and pleasure, sin and religious merit; night and day; saint and sinner; high caste and low caste; demons and gods; great and small; ambrosia and life, poison and death; the visible world and the invisible God; life and the lord of life; rich and poor; the beggar and the king; Kási and Magadha;[1] the Ganges and the Karmnásá; the desert of Márwár and the rich plain of Málwá; the Bráhman and the butcher; heaven and hell; sensual passion and asceticism; the Vedas and the Tantras, and every variety of good and evil.

*Dohá* 7.

The Creator has made the universe to consist of things animate and inanimate, good and evil: a saint like a swan takes the milk of goodness and rejects the worthless water.[2]

*Chaupái.*

When the Creator gives men this faculty of judgment they abandon error and become enamoured of the truth; but conquered by time, temperament, or fate, even the good, as a result of their humanity, may err from virtue; but Hari takes their body so to speak and corrects it, and removing all sorrow and sin cleanses it and glorifies them. If the bad through intercourse with the good do good, their inherent badness is not effaced. An impostor of fair outward show may be honoured on account of his garb, but in

[1]Magadha (Bihár) is taken as the opposite to Kási, in consequence of its being the birthplace of Buddhism.

[2]To the swan (*ráj-hans*) is ascribed the fabulous faculty of being able to separate milk from water, after the two have been mixed together.

the end he is exposed and does not succeed, like Kála-nemi, or Rávan, or Ráhu.[1] The good are honoured, notwithstanding their mean appearance, like the bear Jamavant or the monkey Hanumán. Bad company is loss, and good company is gain; this is a truth recognized both by the world and the Veda. In company with the wind the dust flies heavenwards; if it joins water, it becomes mud and sinks. According to the character of the house in which a parrot or *maina* is trained, it learns either to repeat the name of Ráma or to give abuse. With the ignorant soot is mere refuse; but it may make good ink, and be used even for copying a Purána; while water, fire, and air combined become an earth-refreshing rain-cloud.

*Dohá* 8—11.

The planets, medicines, water, air, clothes, all are good and bad things according as their accompaniments are good or bad; and people observe this distinction. Both lunar fortnights are equal as regards darkness and light; but a difference in name has been wisely made, and as the moon waxes or wanes the fortnight is held in high or low esteem. Knowing that the whole universe, whether animate or inanimate, is pervaded by the spirit of Ráma, I reverence with clasped hands the lotus feet of all—gods, giants, men, serpents, birds, ghosts, departed ancestors, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, demons of the night; I pray ye all be gracious to me.

*Chaupái.*

By four modes of birth[2] are produced 84 lakhs of species inhabiting the air, the water, and the earth. With clasped hands I perform an act of adoration, recognizing the whole world as pervaded by the spirit of Sítá and Ráma. In your compassion regard me as your servant, and dissembling no longer, be kind and affectionate.

[1]Kála-nemi by assuming the form of an ascetic imposed for a time upon Hanumán, as Rávan did upon Sítá; and even Vishnu, at the churning of the ocean, was at first deceived by Ráhu, who appeared like one of the gods.

[2]The four *ákaras*, or modes of birth, are named *pindaja* or viviparous; *andaja* or oviparous; *swedaja*, born in sweat, like lice; and *udbhijja*, produced by sprouting, like a tree. The 84 lakhs of species are divided as follows: 9 lakhs of aquatic creatures, 27 lakhs of those attached to the earth, 11 lakhs of insects, 10 lakhs of birds, 23 lakhs of quadrupeds, and 4 lakhs of men. The literal meaning of *ákara* being a mine, *kháni*, which has the same primary signification, is used for it in *Chaupái* 44.

I have no confidence in the strength of my own wisdom, and therefore I supplicate you all. I would narrate the great deeds of Raghupati, but my ability is little and his acts unfathomable. I am not conscious of any special qualification or capacity; my intellect in short is beggarly, while my ambition is imperial; and I am thirsting for nectar, when not even skim-milk is to be had. Good people all pardon my presumption and listen to my childish babbling as a father and mother delight to hear the lisping prattle of their little one. Perverse and malignant fools may laugh, who pick out faults in others wherewith to adorn themselves. Every one is pleased with his own rhymes, whether they be pungent or insipid; but those who praise another's voice are good men, of whom there are few in the world; there are many enough like the rivers, which on getting a rainfall swell out a flood of their own, but barely one like the generous ocean, which swells on beholding the fulness of the moon.

*Dohá* 12.

My lot is low, my purpose high; but I am confident of one thing, that the good will be gratified to hear me, though fools may laugh.

*Chaupái.*

The laughter of fools will be grateful to me: the crow calls the *koil's* voice harsh. The goose ridicules the swan, and the frog the *chátak;* so the low and vile abuse pure verse. As they have no taste for poetry nor love for Ráma, I am glad that they should laugh. If my homely speech and poor wit are fit subjects for laughter, let them laugh; it is no fault of mine. If they have no understanding of true devotion to the Lord, the tale will seem insipid enough: but to the true and orthodox worshippers of Hari and Hara the story of Raghubar will be sweet as honey. The singer's devotion to Ráma will by itself be sufficient embellishment to make the good hear and praise the melody. Though no poet, nor clever, nor accomplished; though unskilled in every art and science; though all the elegant devices of letters and rhetoric, and the countless variations of metre, and the infinite divisions of sentiment and style, and all the defects and excellencies of verse, and the gift to distinguish between them are unknown to me, I declare and record it on a fair white sheet—

*Dohá* 13.

That though my style has not a single charm of its own, it has a charm known throughout the world, which men of discernment will ponder as they read—

*Chaupái.*

The gracious name of Raghupati; all-purifying essence of the Puránas and the Veda, abode of all that is auspicious, destroyer of all that is inauspicious, ever murmured in prayer by Umá and the great Tripurári. The most elegant composition of the most talented poet has no real beauty if the name of Ráma is not in it; in the same way as a lovely woman adorned with the richest jewels is vile if unclothed. But the most worthless production of the feeblest versifier, if adorned with the name of Ráma, is heard and repeated with reverence by the wise, like bees gathering honey; though the poetry has not a single merit, the glory of Ráma is manifested in it. This is the confidence which has possessed my soul; is there anything which good company fails to exalt? Thus smoke forgets its natural pungency, and with incense yields a sweet scent. My language is that in vulgar use, but my subject is the highest, the story of Ráma, enrapturing the world.

*Chhand* 1.[1]

Though rapturous lays befit his praise, who cleansed a world accurst,
Yet Tulsi's rivulet of rhyme may slake a traveller's thirst.
How pure and blest on Siva's breast show the vile stains of earth!
So my poor song flows bright and strong illumed by Ráma's worth.

*Dohá* 14-15.

From its connection with the glory of Ráma, my verse will be most grateful to every one. When you apply sandal to your forehead, do you think of it as merely a production of wood? Though

[1]The *chhands* are generally somewhat enthusiastic outbursts, in which the oft-repeated rhyme is a little apt to run away with the sense. The better to indicate their special character, one-half of the 62 that occur in this book will be rendered metrically. The first line always repeats some emphatic word from the last line of the preceding stanza.

a cow be black, its milk is pure and wholesome, and all men drink it; and so, though my speech is rough, it tells the glory of Sita and Rama, and will therefore be heard and repeated with pleasure by sensible people.

*Chaupái.*

A diamond in a serpent's head, a ruby on a mountain-top, a pearl in an elephant's head, are all without beauty; but in a king's diadem or on a lovely woman they are lustrous in the extreme. Similarly, as wise men tell, poetry is born below, but inspired from above; for it is in answer to pious prayer that the Muse leaves her heavenly abode and speeds to earth; without immersion in the fountain of Rama's deeds all labour and trouble count for nothing. A sensible poet understands this, and sings only of Hari, the redeemer, and his virtues. To recount the doings of common people is mere idle beating of the head, which the Muse loaths. Genius is as it were a shell in the sea of the soul, waiting for the October rain of inspiration; if a gracious shower falls, each drop is a pearl of poetry.

*Dohá* 16.

Then dexterously pierced and strung together on the thread of Rama's adventures, they form a beautiful chain to be worn on a good man's breast.

*Chaupái.*

Men born in this grim iron age are outwardly swans, but inwardly as black as crows; walking in evil paths, abandoning the Veda, embodiments of falsehood, vessels of impurity, hypocrites, professing devotion to Rama, but slaves of gold, of passion, and of lust. Among them I give the first place to myself, a hypocrite, alas! of the very first rank; but were I to tell all my vices, the list would so grow that it would have no end. I have therefore said but very little, but a word is enough for the wise. Let none of my hearers blame me for offering so many apologies; whoever is troubled in mind by them is more stupid and dull of wit than I am myself. Though I am no poet, and have no pretensions to cleverness, I sing as best I can the virtues of Rama. How unfathomable his actions, how shallow my poor world-entangled intellect! Before

the strong wind that could uproot Mount Meru, of what account is such a mere flock of cotton as I am? When I think of Ráma's infinite majesty I tremble as I write.

*Dohá* 17.

For Sarasvati, Sesh-nág, Siva and Brahma, the Shástras, the Veda, the Puránas, all are unceasingly singing his perfection, yet fail to declare it.

*Chaupái.*

All know the greatness of the lord to be thus unutterable, yet none can refrain from attempting to expound it. For this reason the Veda also has declared many different modes of effectual worship. There is one God, passionless, formless, uncreated, the universal soul, the supreme spirit, the all-pervading, whose shadow is the world;[1] who has become incarnate and done many things, only for the love that he bears to his faithful people; all-gracious and compassionate to the humble; who in his mercy ever refrains from anger against those whom he loves and knows to be his own; restorer of the past; protector of the poor;[2] all good, all-powerful, the lord Raghuráj. In this belief the wise sing the glory of Hari, and their song thus becomes holy and meritorious. I, too, bowing my head to Ráma's feet, am emboldened to sing his fame, following a path which has been made easy by the divine bards who have trodden it before me.

*Dohá* 18.

As when a king has prepared a bridge over a broad stream, an ant, insignificant as it is, is able to cross without difficulty.

*Chaupái.*

In this manner reassuring myself, I undertake to recount Ráma's charming adventures, as they have been reverently told by Vyása and the other great poets, whose lotus feet I adore, praying, Fulfil ye my desire; both the Sanskrit poets of these latter days who have sung of Raghupati, and also those of high intelligence

[1] Thus, too, according to the Catholic theologian, the visible is the shadow, and the invisible the substance.

[2] *Gharib-nawáz.* This is the first Persian word that has occurred in the poem.

who have written in Prákrit and the vulgar tongue. All who have been in time past, or who now are, or who hereafter shall be, I bow to all in the utmost good faith and sincerity. Be propitious and grant this boon, that in assemblies of good men my song may be honoured! If the good and wise will not honour it, the silly poet has had all his labour in vain. The only fame, or poetry, or power that is of any worth is that which like Ganges water is good for all. The incongruity between Ráma's glory and my rude speech makes me doubt; but by your favour all will turn out well; for even coarse cloth if embroidered with silk becomes beautiful. Be kind enough to think of this, and my style will then match the excellence of my theme.

*Dohá* 19.

A clear style and an exalted theme are both commendable; and when they are combined, an enemy even, forgetting his natural hostility, will repeat the strain. But such a combination is not to be acquired without genius, and genius I have none; so again and again I beg of you to bear with me while I sing the glory of Hari. The great poets are like the swans sporting in the Mánasa lake of Hari's deeds; look on me as a well-meaning child and make allowances.[1]

*Soraṭhá* 2.

I reverence the lotus feet of the great sage who composed the Rámáyana, smooth strains on rough topics and faultless though a story of the faulty.[2] I reverence the four Vedas, which are like a boat in which to cross the ocean of existence, without ever dreaming of weariness, while recounting Ráma's excellent glory. I

[1] In Hindi poetry it is considered a beauty if a phrase is so worded as to be capable of two or more different interpretations. Thus the line rendered as above may be literally translated: Hearing my childish supplication, seeing my good desire, be compassionate towards me—which is the meaning I have expressed. But it might with equal correctness be rendered: Hearing my childish supplication, seeing their excellent beauty, be compassionate towards me. It is sufficient to note this peculiarity once for all; but there are an immense number of lines in which, though the meaning which I have adopted seems to me on the whole the one most appropriate to the context, it by no means follows that other interpretations are not, from the grammarian's point of view, equally correct.

[2] A literal rendering would be—Rough, soft, beautiful, faultless, full of faults. But there are two plays upon words; for *sakhar*, ordinarily 'rough,' and therefore contrasted with *sukomal*, soft, is also intended to bear the meaning—'relating to the demon Khar;' and similarly *dúshan sahit*, 'full of faults,' can be forced into meaning 'with the demon Dúshan.

reverence the dust on the feet of Brahma, creator of this ocean-like world, from which have been produced men, good and bad; as of old from the same source came at once ambrosia, the moon, and the cow Kámadhenu, and also poison and intoxicating liquor.

*Dohá* 20.

Reverencing with clasped hands gods, Bráhmans, philosophers, and sages, I pray—'Be gracious to me and accomplish all my fair desire.'

*Chaupái.*

Again I reverence the Sarasvati and the Ganges, both holy and beautiful streams, cleansing sin by a single draught or immersion, whose name as soon as uttered or heard at once removes error. I adore as I would my guru, or my natural parents, Siva and Párvati, protectors of the humble, daily benefactors, servants and courtiers in attendance on Síta's lord, and in every way Tulsi's true friends; who in their benevolence and considering the degeneracy of the times have themselves composed many spells in a barbarous language, incoherent syllables and unintelligible mutterings, mysterious revelations of the great Siva.[1] By his patronage I may make my story an agreeable one, and by meditating on Siva and Párvati may relate Ráma's adventures in a way that will give pleasure. It is only by his favour that my verse can be beautified, as a dark night by the moon and stars. Whoever in a devout spirit, with intelligence and attention, hears or repeats this lay of mine, he shall become full of true love for Ráma, and cleansed from worldly stains shall enjoy heavenly felicity.

*Dohá* 21.

Whether I am awake or dreaming, if Siva and Gauri grant me their favour, then my words shall come true and this shall be the effect of my song, though it be in the vulgar tongue.

*Chaupái.*

I reverence the holy city of Ayodhyá and the river Sarjú cleansing from all earthly impurity. I salute also the inhabitants of the

[1]The allusion is to the magic spells and mystical formularies of the Tantras, which are for the most part mere strings of uncouth and utterly unmeaning words, such as OM, AIN, HRIN, SRIN, and again AN, HUN, PHAT, two mantras recited during the ceremonies of the Durgá Púja. They all purport to have been revealed by Siva himself to Párvati.

city, for whom the Lord had no little affection ; seeing that he ignored all the sin of Sita's calumniator and set men's minds at rest.[1] I reverence Kausalya, eastern heaven, from which glory was diffused over the whole world ; whence Raghupati arose as a lovely moon, giving joy to the world, but blighting like a frost the lotus leaves of vice. To King Dasarath and all his queens, incarnations of virtue and felicity, I make obeisance in word, deed, and heart, saying: Be gracious to me as to a servant of your son, O parents of Ráma, that acme of greatness, ye in whose creation the creator surpassed himself.

*Sorathá* 3.

I reverence the King of Avadh, who had such true love for Ráma's feet that, when parted from his lord, his life snapped and parted too like a straw.

*Chaupái.*

I salute the King of Videha, with all his court, who had the greatest affection for Ráma ; though he concealed his devotion under royal state, yet it broke out as soon as he saw him. Then, next, I throw myself at the feet of Bharat, whose constancy and devotion surpass description ; whose soul like a bee thirsting for sweets was ever hovering round the lotus feet of Ráma. I reverence too the lotus feet of Lachhman, cool, comely, and source of delight to their worshippers, whose glory is as it were the standard for the display of Ráma's pure emblazonment. Thou who, to remove the terrors of the world, didst become incarnate in the form of the thousand-headed serpent for the sake of the universe, be ever propitious to me, O son of Sumitra, ocean of compassion, storehouse of perfection. I bow also to Ripusúdan (*i.e.* Satrughna), the generous hero, Bharat's constant companion ; and to the conqueror Hanumán, whose glory has been told by Ráma himself ;

[1]The calumniator was a washerman whose wife had gone away without asking his permission to her father's house and had stayed there three days. On her return her husband refused to take her in, saying, Do you think I am a Ráma who takes back his Sita after she has been living for eleven months in another man's house ? When this came to Ráma's ears, he showed his respect for the delicacy of his subjects by dismissing Sita, and instead of punishing the washerman promoted him to honour.

*Soraṭhá* 4.

The son of the wind, of profound intelligence, like a consuming fire in the forest of vice, in whose heart Ráma, equipped with bow and arrows, has established his home;

*Chaupái.*

The monkey lord, the king of bears and demons, Angad and all the monkey host, I throw myself at the benign feet of them all, for though contemptible in appearance they yet found Ráma. I worship all his faithful servants—whether birds, beasts, gods, men, or demons—all his unselfish adherents. I worship Sukadeva, Sanat-Kumára, Nárad, and the other sages of excellent renown, putting my head to the ground and crying: 'My lords, be gracious to your servant.' I propitiate the lotus feet of Janak's daughter, Jánaki, mother of the world, best beloved of the fountain of mercy; by whose grace I may attain to unclouded intelligence. Again in heart, in word, and deed I worship the all-worthy feet of Raghunáth; the glance of whose lotus eyes, like an arrow from the bow, rejoices his votaries by destroying all their misfortunes.

*Dohá* 22.

As a word and its meaning are inseparable, and as a wave cannot be distinguished from the water of which it is composed, the difference being only in the name; so with Ráma and Síta, the refuge of the distressed, whom I adore.

*Chaupái.*

I adore the name of Ráma as borne by Raghubar,[1] the source of all light, whether of the fire, or the sun, or the moon; substance of the triune god; vital breath of the Veda; the passionless; the incomparable; the source of all good; the great spell muttered by Mahádev and enjoined by him as necessary to salvation even at Kási. By confessing its power, Ganes obtained the first place among the gods;[2] by its power, though he muttered it backwards,

[1]For there are two other Rámas besides Ráma-chandra, viz. Parasuráma and Balaráma.

[2]According to the legend, the gods were disputing among themselves as to which of them should be accounted the first. To settle the matter, Brahma proposed that they all should race round the world. They started accordingly, each on the animal which he most delighted to ride; and Ganes being mounted,

the great poet Válmiki attained to purity; by its repetition, after she had heard from Siva that it was equal to a thousand names, Bhawáni was able to join her husband;[1] while he, Mahádev, in his delight on beholding her simple faith, assumed the woman, making that ornament of her sex the ornament of his own body. Again, it was by the power of this name that the poison swallowed by Mahádev was converted into ambrosia.

*Dohá* 23.

Devotion to Ráma, says Tulsi Dás, is like the rich season of the rains; but the two syllables of Ráma's name are best of all, like the months of Sáwan and Bhádon.

*Chaupái.*

Two sweet and gracious syllables, the eyes as it were of the soul, easy to remember, satisfying every wish, a gain in this world, and felicity in the next; most delightful to utter, to hear, or to remember; as dear to Tulsi as the inseparable Ráma and Lachhman. My love is inflamed as I speak of these mystic syllables, as intimately connected as the universal soul and the soul of man; twin brothers like Nara and Naráyan, preservers of the world, redeemers of the elect; bright jewels in the ears of beauteous Faith; pure and beneficent as the sun and the moon; like sweetness and contentment, the inseparable attributes of ambrosia; like the tortoise and serpent, supporters of the world; like the bee and the lotus of a pious soul; and as sweet to the tongue as Hari and Balaráma were sweet to Jasodá.

*Dohá* 24.

Like a royal umbrella or jewelled diadem over all the other letters of the alphabet shine the two consonants in Ráma's name.

as was his custom, on nothing better than a rat, was of course soon left far behind. In his distress the sage Nárad appeared to him and suggested that he should write the word Ráma in the dust and pace round that, for in it was virtually included all creation. This he did, and returned to Brahma, who at once awarded him the prize.

[1]One day when Siva had finished eating, he called to his wife Párvati to come and take her food too before it got cold. She pleaded that she had not yet finished repeating, according to her daily wont, the thousand names of Vishnu; whereupon her husband instructed her that it would suffice if she said the mere name of 'Ráma' once, for that had as much virtue as all the thousand. She at once believed him and complied; and the god was so pleased at her ready faith that in her honour he assumed the Ardha-nári, or half-male, half-female form.

*Chaupái.*

A name may be regarded as equivalent to what is named, the connection being such as subsists between a master and servant. Both name and form are shadows of the lord, who rightly understood is unspeakable and uncreated. They are sometimes wrongly distinguished as greater and less, but the wise will understand my explanation of the difference between them. See now, the form is of less importance than the name, for without the name you cannot come to a knowledge of the form; if the very form be in your hand, still without knowing the name it is not recognized; but meditate on the name without seeing the form, and your soul is filled with devotion.[1] The mystery of name and form is unspeakable and cannot be told, but delightful to those who have intuition of it; the name acting as a witness between the material and immaterial forms of the deity, and being a guide and interpreter to both.

*Dohá* 25.

Place the name of Ráma as a jewelled lamp at the door of your lips and there will be light, as you will, both inside and out.

*Chaupái.*

As his tongue repeats this name, the ascetic wakes to life, his thoughts free from passion and all detached from the world; he enjoys the incomparable felicity of God, who is unspeakable, unblemished, without either name or form. Those who would understand

[1]To the European reader all this panegyric of the Divine name will probably at first sight appear extravagant and absurd. But from the Hindú point of view it is reasonable enough, and *mutatis mutandis* may be paralleled by many similar expressions in the writings of Catholic theologians, as, for example, the following:—

Sancta oratio, brevis ad legendum, facilis ad tenendum, dulcis ad cogitandum, fortis ad protegendum.—*Thos. à Kempis.*

Suo sanctissimo nomine, quod quinque litteris constat, confert quotidie veniam peccatoribus.—*P. Pelbart.*

Nomen tuum devote nominari non potest sine nominantis utilitate.—*S. Bonaventura.*

Nomen solum sufficit ad medendum; nam pestis tam efficax nulla sic hæret, quæ ad nomen non cedat continuo.—*Ricardus de S. Lamentio.*

Spiritus maligni diffugiunt, audito nomine, velut ab igne.—*S. Bridget.*

Omnes dæmones verentur hoc nomen et timent, qui audientes statim relinquunt animam de unguibus quibus tenebant eam.—*S. Bridget.*

Gloriosum et admirabile est nomen; qui illud retinent, non expavescent in puncto mortis.—*S. Bonaventura.*

Nomen plenum est omni dulcedine et suavitate divina.—*Honorius.*

mysteries, by repeating this name understand them; the religious, who repeat this name absorbed in contemplation, become workers of miracles,[1] and acquire the power of rendering themselves invisible and the like; those who repeat it when burdened with affliction are freed from their troubles and become happy. Thus there are in the world four kinds of Ráma-worshippers, all four good, holy, and beneficent; but of these four sages who trust in the name they are the most dear to the lord who understand his mysteries. His name is great in the four Vedas and in the four ages of the world, but in this fourth age especially there is no other hope.

*Dohá* 26.

All free from sensual passions and absorbed in devout affection to Ráma, the soul disports itself like a fish in the ambrosial lake of his beloved name.

*Chaupái.*

The supreme may be regarded both as devoid of all qualities and also as the quality of goodness; in either aspect it is unspeakable, unfathomable, without beginning and without parallel. To my mind the name is greater than both forms, for by its own might it has brought both under its sway. My friends must not take this as an exaggeration on my part, for I say it confidently and with sincere devotion. The knowledge of the supreme is of two kinds, like fire which is either internal or visible; each is in itself incomprehensible, but is comprehended by means of the name; and therefore I say that the name is greater than either Brahm or Ráma. For the one immortal, true, sentient, complete, and blissful Brahm is all-pervading; yet though such an unchangeable lord is in our very soul, the whole creation is in slavery and wretchedness, till he is revealed in

[1]The miraculous powers that can be acquired by perfect saints, or siddhás, are reckoned as eight in number, and are called *animá, mahimá, garimá, laghimá, prápti, prákámya, ísítwá,* and *vasittwá.* These words denote the faculty—1st, of becoming infinitely small; 2nd, of becoming infinitely great; 3rd, of becoming infinitely heavy; 4th, of becoming infinitely light; 5th, of obtaining whatever one wishes; 6th, of doing whatever one wishes; 7th, of absolute supremacy; 8th, of absolute subjugation. Compare the four gifts of beatitude as enumerated by Catholic theologians, viz.—1st, Agility, by which the soul can in an instant descend from the height of heaven to earth; 2ndly, Brightness, by which (according to S. Augustine) each blessed soul is so much more luminous than the sun as the sun is brighter than any other celestial body; 3rdly, Subtility, by which the soul can penetrate a mountain in the same way as a ray of light passes through a crystal; and 4thly, Impassibility, by which it is exempt from suffering, disease, or death.

definite shape and is energized by the name; as a jewel is not valued till it is so called.

*Dohá* 27.

Thus the virtue of the name is infinite and transcends the supreme, and in my judgment is greater than Ráma himself.

*Chaupái.*

From the love that he bore to his followers, Ráma took the form of a man and by himself enduring misery secured their happiness. By incessantly and devoutly repeating his name, all the faithful may attain to felicity. Ráma himself redeemed only one woman, the ascetic's wife;[1] but his name has corrected the errors of millions of sinners. To gratify the Rishi Viswamitra, Ráma wrought the destruction of Suketu's daughter Tádaká with her son Maríeha and his army; but as the sun puts an end to night, so his name has scattered all crime and pain and despair. In his own person Ráma broke the bow of Siva, but his glorious name has broken the fear of death;[2] the lord himself restored to life only the forest of Dandaka,[3] but his name has sanctified countless generations; the son of Raghu destroyed many demons, but his name has destroyed all the evil of the world.

*Dohá* 28.

Raghunáth conferred immortality on all his own faithful servants, even down to the vulture Jatáyu;[4] but his name, precious theme of the Vedas, has delivered innumerable wretches.

*Chaupái.*

Ráma, as all men know, extended his protection to Sugríva and Vibhíshana; but his name has protected countless supplicants,

[1]Ahalya, the wife of Rishi Gautama, having been seduced by the god Indrá, was cursed by her indignant lord, and doomed to remain alone and invisible in the forest for thousands of years till Ráma should come and redeem her.

[2]Here is a play upon words which cannot be preserved in the translation, for in the first half of the couplet the word *bhava* is to be taken as a name of Siva, while in the second half it means life, or rather death, since, according to Hindú ideas, all conscious life is merely a preparation for inevitable death.

[3]Dandaka is the name of the pathless forest near the Godavari, where Sítá was stolen away by Rávan.

[4]The bird Jatáyu stopped the chariot in which Síta was being carried off by Rávan and was mortally wounded by the giant, but he lived long enough to give Ráma tidings of his beloved. In return for his faithful services Ráma and Lakshman themselves performed his funeral rites.

shining forth gloriously in the world and the Veda. Ráma assembled a host of bears and monkeys and had no little trouble to build his bridge; his name can dry up the ocean of life; meditate thereon, O ye faithful. Ráma killed in battle Rávan and all his family and returned with Sítá[1] to his own city, a king to Avadh his capital, while gods and saints hymned his praises; but his servants, if only they affectionately meditate on his name, vanquish with ease the whole army of error, and move, absorbed in interior ecstasy, without even a dream of sorrow.

*Dohá 29.*

The name is greater than either Brahm or Ráma, and is the best gift of the best giver; this Mahádev knew when he selected it from the hundred *crores*[2] of verses in the Rámáyana.

*Chaupái.*

By the power of this name the blessed god of curst attire, even the great Siva, acquired immortality; by the power of this name Sukadeva, Sanat-Kumára, and all saints, sages, and ascetics have enjoyed heavenly raptures; Nárad too acknowledged its power, himself as dear to Hara and Hari as Hari is dear to the world; by repeating this name Prahlád through the lord's grace became the crown of the faithful.[3] Dhruva in his distress repeated the name of Hari, and was rewarded by a fixed and incomparable station in the heavens;[4] by meditating on this holy name Hanumán won and kept the affection of Ráma; by the power of Hari's name Ajámil[5] and the elephant

[1]Sugríva, the monkey chief, assisted Ráma in his search for Sita by showing him the ornaments she had purposely dropped on the way; and Ráma rewarded him by installing him as sovereign of Kishkindyá in the place of his brother Báli. Similarly, Vibhishana was made king of Lanká in the room of Rávan.

[2]Of these hundred crores it is said that Siva distributed 33 crores to each of the three worlds. The one crore that remained over he similarly divided into three sets of 33 lákhs each; the odd lákh into three sets of 30 thousand each; the odd thousand again into three sets of three hundred each; the odd hundred into three sets of thirty-three each, and finally the one remaining *sloka* into three sets of ten letters each. The two letters that remained over, being the two consonants in the name of Ráma, he kept for himself, as containing the gist of the whole matter.

[3]Prahlád, the pious son of the impious Hiranya-Kasipu, who was destroyed by Vishnu in the Narsinh avatár, was made equal to Indrá for life, and finally united with Vishnu.

[4]Dhruva, the son of Uttánapáda, being slighted by his stepmother, left his home with the determination of winning himself a name in the world. By the advice of the seven Rishis, he devoted himself to the service of Vishnu, and was finally exalted by the god to the heavens, where he shines as the pole-star.

[5] According to the history given in the 6th Skandha of the Srí Bhágavat, Ajámil was a Bráhman of Kanauj, of most dissolute and abandoned life. By a

and the harlot all three obtained salvation: why further extend the list? not even the incarnate Ráma could exhaust it.

*Dohá* 30.

The name of Ráma is as the tree of paradise, the centre of all that is good in the world; and whoever meditates upon it becomes (says Tulsi Dás) transformed as it were from a vile hemp-stick into a sweet-smelling tulsi plant.

*Chaupái.*

In all four ages of the world; in all time, past, present, or future; in the three spheres of earth, heaven and hell; any creature that repeats this name becomes blessed. This is the verdict of the Veda, the Puránas and all the saints—that the love of Ráma is the fruit of all virtue. In the first age, contemplation; in the second age, sacrifice; in the Dvápar age temple worship was the appointed propitiation; but in this vile and impure iron age, where the soul of man floats like a fish in an ocean of sin, in these fearful times, the name is the only tree of life, and by meditating on it all commotion is stilled. In these evil days neither good deeds, nor piety, nor spiritual wisdom is of any avail, but only the name of Ráma: his name is as it were the wisdom and the might of Hanumán to expose and destroy the Kálanemi-like[1] wiles of the wicked world.

happy chance the youngest of the ten sons whom he had by a prostitute was named Naráyan; and the father when at the point of death happened to summon him to his side. But the god Naráyan, thus casually invoked, himself came in answer to the call, and rescued the guilty soul from the demons that were about to carry it off to hell.

The story of the elephant is given in the 8th Skandha of the same Purána. An alligator had seized him by the foot while bathing, and though he struggled desperately for 2,000 years, he was unable to rid himself of his enemy, and at last was deserted by all his wives and children. He then began to give himself up for lost; but reflecting on the pertinacity of the alligator, he came to the conclusion that the creature must be the embodiment of all the sins he had committed in previous existences, and that god alone could save him. He therefore addressed a fervent prayer to Naráyan, who thus invoked by name came down from heaven, and with his discus Sudarsan cut off the alligator's head and delivered the suppliant.

The 8th chapter of the 11th Skandha gives the story of the penitent prostitute Pingalá.

[1]Kálanemi was the uncle of Rávan, who promised him half his kingdom if he would kill Hanumán. Accordingly he assumed the garb of a devotee and retired to a solitary hermitage on a mountain-top, where in course of time he was visited by Hanumán. The latter accepted the hospitality of the holy man, as he took him to be, but before eating went to a pond close by to bathe. Here as soon as he put his foot in the water it was seized by a crocodile, which, however, he soon killed, and out of its dead body sprung a beautiful nymph, who had long been under a curse. She bade him beware of Kálanemi, who was sitting deep in thought and already enjoying in anticipation the kingdom which he made sure he had secured.

*Dohá* 31.

As Narsinh was manifested to destroy the enemy of heaven, Hiranyakasipu, and protect Prahlád, so is Ráma's name for the destruction of the world and the protection of the pious.

*Chaupái.*

By repeating this name, whether in joy or in sadness, in action or in repose, bliss is diffused all around. Meditating upon it and bowing my head to Raghunáth, I compose these lays in his honour; he will correct all my defects, whose mercy is mercy inexhaustible. Thou art my good lord, I thy poor servant; bear this in mind and graciously protect me. The world and scripture alike declare it to be a characteristic of a good master that he hears prayer and acknowledges affection. Rich or poor, villager or citizen, learned or unlearned, pure or impure, good poet or bad poet, all according to their ability extol their king as being good, amiable, and gracious, lord of incomparable compassion; and he hears and accepts their honest attempts, recognizing in their words both devotion and a measure of ability. This is the way with earthly kings, and Ráma is their crown; he is satisfied with simple piety, though in one who is duller and feebler of intellect even than I am.

*Dohá* 32-33.

The merciful Ráma will regard the love and zeal of his poor servant, he who made a ship out of a rock and wise ministers out of monkeys and bears; although I am a byword, and every one says Ráma is exposed to ridicule, in that he, being such a lord, has such a servant as Tulsi Dás.

*Chaupái.*

My presumption is indeed very sad, as villainous and disgusting as hell; but seeing me alarmed with these terrors of my own, Ráma would not dream of regarding them; but hearing and with his own eyes perceiving my good faith, the lord applauded my devout intention. Though my story is spoilt by the telling, Ráma is satisfied and accounts it good, since the will is good. The lord is not mindful of a chance fault, but on every occasion he considers

His dream was rudely broken by Hanumán, who seized him in his strong arm and hurled him headlong through the air, till he fell at Rávan's feet in Lanká.

the heart. Thus the very crime for which he like a huntsman killed Báli, was in turn the sin of Sugríva, and again of Vibhíshan; but in their case Ráma did not dream of censure, but honoured them both at the meeting with Bharat and commended them in open court.

*Dohá* 34—36.

The lord under the tree and the monkey on the bough he accounted all equal to himself: says Tulsi, there is no master so generous as Ráma. O Ráma, thy goodness is good to all, and if so, then good to Tulsi also. Thus declaring my merits and defects and again bowing my head to all, I proceed to tell the glorious acts of Raghubar, by the sound of which all the sin of the world is effaced.

*Chaupái.*

Now listen all in friendly wise while I relate the story as I have heard it, as it was communicated by Yájnavalkya to the great sage Bharadwája. It was first of all composed by Siva and graciously revealed to Umá, and again declared to Káka-bhusundi, known to be chief among the votaries of Ráma. From him Yájnavalkya received it, and he recited it to Bharadwája. These listeners and reciters were of equal virtue and had an equal insight into Hari's sportive actions. Their intellect comprehended all time, as it were a plum in the palm of the hand; other intelligent votaries of Hari have also in different ways heard, understood, and spoken.

*Dohá* 37-38.

I again heard the story from my own master at Súkarkhet (*i.e.* Soron)[1] without understanding it, when I was quite a child and had no sense. And how could such a dull creature, being both ignorant and eaten up with worldly impurities, understand so mysterious a legend and a dialogue between such sage interlocutors?

*Chaupái.*

But my master repeated it time after time, till at length I understood as much as could be expected; and I now put it down in the vulgar tongue as well as my understanding allows me; with

[1]Soron, the modern name, is a corruption of Súkara-gráma (Boar-town). The place is still much frequented by pilgrims, the principal concourse being on the festival of the Varáha (or Boar) avatár. Súkara-gráma=Súar-gánw=Súaránw=Soron.

my heart fixed on Hari's messenger (*i.e.* Hanumán), I speak with all the little sense, judgment, and ability that I possess. The story that I have to tell clears my own doubts as it does every other error and delusion, and is a raft on which to cross the ocean of existence. The story of Ráma is a resting-place for the intellect; a universal delight; a destroyer of worldly impurity; an antidote to the venom of passion; a match to enkindle the fire of wisdom; the cow of plenty of this iron age; flowers of ambrosia to make good men immortal; a stream of nectar on the face of the earth; destroyer of death; a snake to devour toad-like error; befriending the good by the destruction of hell, in the same way as Párvati befriended the gods by destroying the army of demons; like Lakshmi rising from the sea in the assembly of the saints; immoveable as the earth that supports all the weight of creation; like the Jamuná, to put to shame the angel of death; like Kási the saviour of all living creatures; as dear to Ráma as the pure Tulsi; as dear to Tulsi Dás as his own heart's desire; as dear to Siva as the daughter of Mount Mekal (*i.e.* the Narmada), bestower of all perfection and prosperity; like Aditi, gracious mother of all the gods; the perfect outcome of love and devotion to Raghubar.

*Dohá* 39.

The story of Ráma is as the river Mandákini and a good intention like Mount Chitrakút, while sincere affection is as it were the forest where Ráma and Síta love to abide.

*Chaupái.*

The legend of Ráma is like the delectable wishing-stone; or as fair jewels to adorn Wisdom, the saint's bride; His perfection is the joy of the world, conferring a state of virtue, wealth, and eternal salvation:[1] a saintly instructor in wisdom, asceticism, and spiritual contemplation; like the physician of the gods to heal the fearful diseases of life; the very parent of devotion to Síta and Ráma;

[1]The reading of all the copies I have seen is *Dáni mukti dhan dharm dhám ke*; and this accordingly I have translated. But *dhám* might with advantage be corrected to *kám*, in which case the enumeration would be the ordinary fourfold one of the ends of human existence, viz. *dharm, kám, artha, moksha*, 'religion, pleasure, wealth, and final salvation.' It is, however, possible that Tulsi may purposely have suppressed *kám*, pleasure, as unworthy to be accounted a τελος, though in many other passages he includes it. *Dhám* may also be translated the Supreme Being, in which sense it gives a name to the sect of the Dhámis, or disciples of Prán Náth.

the seed of all holy vows and practices ; the destroyer of sin, of pain, and of sorrow ; our guardian in this world and the next ; the Prime Minister and the General of Kingly Counsel ; a very Agastya[1] to drink up the illimitable ocean of desire ; a young lion in the forest of life to attack the wild elephants of lust, anger, and sensual impurity ; as dear to Siva as the presence of a highly-honoured guest ; as an abundant shower to quench the fire of meanness ; a potent spell against the venom of the world ; effacing from the forehead the deep brand of evil destiny ; dispelling the darkness of error like the rays of the sun ; like a shower on a rice-field refreshing the aridity of prayer ; like the tree of paradise granting every desire ; like Hari and Hara accessible and gracious to all servants ; like the stars in the clear autumn sky of the poet's mind ; like the richness of life enjoyed by Rámа's votaries ; like the perfect felicity that is the reward of virtue ; like the assembly of the faithful in benevolence and composure ; like a swan in the pure lake of the believer's soul ; like the abundant flood of Ganga's purifying stream.

*Dohá* 40-41.

Rámа's perfect merit is like a strong fire to consume the dry wood of schism and heresy, evil practices and worldly deceit, hypocrisy and infidelity. His acts are like the rays of the full moon that give pleasure to all, but are specially consoling to the souls of the pious like the lotus and the *chakor*.

*Chaupái.*

All the questions that Bhawáni asked, with Sankara's replies thereto, I now proceed to give in substance, with agreeable diversity of style. No one is to be astonished if he should happen not to have heard any particular legend before ; for a wise man on hearing for the first time any marvellous act will feel no surprise, reasoning thus with himself : I know well that there is no limit in the world to the stories about Rámа, for he has in various forms become incarnate, and the verses of the Rámáyana are some thousand millions in number ; his glorious acts are of myriad diversity and have been

[1]As Agastya was one day worshipping by the sea-side a wave came and washed away some of his altar furniture, whereupon in three draughts he drank the whole ocean dry.

sung by sages in countless ways.[1] So indulge no doubts, but listen reverently and devoutly.

*Dohá* 42.

Ráma is infinite, his perfections infinite, and his legends of immeasurable extent ; men of enlightened understanding will therefore wonder at nothing they hear.

*Chaupái.*

Having in this manner put away all doubt, I place on my head the dust from the lotus feet of my master, and with folded hands making a general obeisance, that no fault may attach to my telling of the story, and bowing my head reverently before Siva, I proceed to sing of Ráma's excellent glory. In this *Sambat* year of 1631, I write with my head at Hari's feet, on Tuesday the 9th of the sweet month of Chait at the city of Avadh ; on the day when the scriptures say Ráma was born ; when the spirits of all holy places there assemble, with demons, serpents, birds, men, saints, and gods, and there offer homage to Raghunáth, while the enlightened keep the great birthday festival and hymn Ráma's high glory.

*Dohá* 43.

Pious crowds bathe in the all-purifying stream of the Sarjú and murmur Ráma's name, while his dark and beautiful form is imprinted on their hearts.

*Chaupái.*

The Vedas and Puránas declare that sin is cleansed by the mere sight or touch of this holy stream as well as by bathing in or drinking of it. Its immeasurable grandeur is indescribable even by the pure intelligence of Sarasvati. The city, exalting to Ráma's heaven,[2] beautiful, celebrated through all worlds, is so all-purifying that countless as are the number of animate species that result from the four modes of birth, yet every individual that is freed from the

[1] "Truth has never been grasped on all sides, nor has ever been embraced entirely by the mind of man; and no one can gaze attentively on that truth which is always old, without discovering these beauties that are always new." These words of Abp. Dechamps express in abstract form the very same idea that the Hindú poet has presented in the concrete.

[2] The compound may also mean—giving a home to Ráma—and probably both meanings are intended.

body at Avadh is free for ever. Knowing it to be in every way charming, a bestower of success and a mine of auspiciousness, I there made a beginning of my sacred song, which will destroy in those who hear it the mad phrensy of lust: its mere name—lake of Ráma's acts—serves to refresh the ear, while the soul, like an elephant escaping from a forest on fire with lust, plunges into it and gains relief; delight of the sages, as composed by Sambhu, holy and beautiful; consuming the three ill conditions of sin, sorrow, and want; putting an end to the evil practices and impurities of the wicked world; first made by Mahádeva and buried in the deep lake of his own soul till at an auspicious moment he declared it to Umá; thus Siva looking into his own soul and rejoicing gave it the excellent name of Rám-charit-mánas.[1] And this is the blessed legend that I repeat; hear it, good people, reverently and attentively.

*Dohá* 44.

Now meditating upon Umá and him who has a bull emblazoned on his standard (*i.e.* Mahádeva) I explain the connection, showing how it is a lake and in what manner it is formed, and for what reason it has spread through the world.[2]

*Chaupái.*

By the blessing of Sambhu a bright idea has come into the poet Tulsi's mind regarding the Rám-charit-mánas, which I will state as well as I can, subject to the correction of those good people whose attention I invite. The heart is as it were a deep place in a land of good thoughts, the Vedas and Puránas are the sea, and saints are as clouds, which rain down praises of Ráma in sweet, grateful, and auspicious showers; the sportive actions related of him are like the inherent purity and cleansing power of rain-water, while devotion, which is beyond the power of words to describe, is its sweetness and coolness. When such a shower falls on the rice-fields of virtue

[1] From this it will be seen that the name which Tulsi Dás himself gave to his poem was not 'the Rámáyana,' but the Rám-charit-mánas, a name which may be interpreted to mean either the lake or the soul of Ráma's acts. In the stanza above translated the word is first taken in the one sense, and then in the other; and as there is no English word with the same double signification, some obscurity is unavoidable.

[2] The words may also bear the following secondary meaning: I relate the whole history, showing how the great soul became incarnate, and why it dwelt in the world.

it gives new life to the faithful, and as its holy drops fall to the earth they are collected in the channel supplied by the ears, and flowing into the lake of the soul fill it and then settle down permanently, cool, beautiful, and refreshing.

*Dohá* 45.

This pure and holy lake has four beautiful *ghát*s, viz. the four charming dialogues contrived by divine wisdom.

*Chaupái.*

The seven Books are its beautiful flights of steps which the eyes of the soul delight to look upon ; the unqualified and unsullied greatness of Raghupati may be described as its clear and deep expanse. The glory of Ráma and Síta as its ambrosial water ; the similes as its pretty wavelets ; the stanzas as its beautiful lotus beds ; the elegance of expression as lovely mother-o'-pearl ; the *chhand*s, *sorathá*s, and couplets as many-coloured lotus flowers ; the incomparable sense, sentiment, and language as the lotus-pollen, filaments, and fragrance ; the exalted action as beautiful swarms of bees ; the sage moral reflections as swans ; the rhythm, involutions, and all poetical artifices as divers graceful kinds of fish ; the precepts regarding the four ends of life, the wise sayings, the thoughtful judgments, the nine styles of composition,[1] the prayers, penance, abstraction, and asceticism, of which examples are given, are all the beautiful living creatures in the lake : the eulogies on the faithful, the saints, and the holy name are like flocks of water-birds ; the religious audience are like circling mango groves, and their faith like the spring season ; the expositions of all the phases of devotion and of tenderness and generosity are like the trees and canopying creepers ; self-denial and holy vows are as flowers, and wisdom as the fruit ; the love for Hari's feet as the sound of the Vedas ; and all other stories and episodes as the parrots and cuckoos and many kinds of birds.

*Dohá* 46.

Pleasant is the sporting of the birds in grove, garden, or partérre, where good intention like a gardener bedews the eyes with the water of affection.

[1]The nine poetical styles (or Indian Muses) are the Sringár-ras, or erotic ; the Hásya-ras, or comic ; the Karuná-ras, or elegiac ; the Bír-ras or heroic ; the Raudra-ras, or tragic ; the Bhayának-ras, or melancholic ; the Vibhatsa-ras, or satiric ; the Sháut-ras, or didactic ; and the Adbhut-ras, or sensational.

*Chaupái.*

Those who accurately recite these lays are like the diligent guardians of the lake; the men and women who reverently hear them, these excellent people are like its owners. Sensual wretches are like the cranes and crows that have no part in this pond nor ever come near it; for here are no prurient and seductive stories like the snails, frogs, and scum on the water, and therefore the lustful crow and greedy crane, if they do come, are disappointed. There is much difficulty in getting to this lake, and it is only by the favour of Ráma that any one reaches it. For there are difficulties of evil society; rocks of heresy; wicked words like tigers, lions, and serpents; the various entanglements of domestic affairs, like vast insurmountable mountains; sensual desires like a dense forest full of wild delusions; and unsound reasoning like a raging flood.

*Dohá* 47.

For those who have not the support of faith nor the company of the saints, nor fervent love for Raghunáth, for them this lake is very hard of access.

*Chaupái.*

Again, if any one laboriously makes his way to it, but becomes overpowered by sleep and feverishness, a strange torpor and numbness settle on his soul, and though he is on the spot the luckless wretch makes no ablution. Having neither bathed in the lake nor drunk of it he goes away in his pride, and when some one comes to enquire of him he abuses it. But no difficulties deter those whom Ráma regards with affection. They reverently bathe, are relieved from the fierce flames of sin, sorrow, and pain, and being sincerely devoted to Ráma will never abandon it. If, my friend, you would bathe in this lake, be diligent to keep company with the good. As for myself, having thus with the mind's eye contemplated it, my poetical faculty has become clear and profound, my heart swells with joy and rapture and overflows in a torrent of ecstatic devotion. My song pours on like a river flooded with Ráma's bright renown; like the river Sarjú, fountain of bliss, with religion and theology for its two fair banks; a holy stream rejoicing the pious soul (*or* born of the Mánas lake) sweeping away all worldly impurities like the trees and roots on its bank.

*Dohá* 48.

The three kinds of hearers in the assembly are like the towns, villages, and hamlets on the river side, while the saints are like the incomparable city of Avadh, full of all that is auspicious.

*Chaupái.*

The beautiful Sarjú, as it were the glory of Ráma, has united with the Ganges of devotion, and the magnificent river Son, like the warlike power of Ráma and his brother, has joined them as a third. Between the two, the Ganges stream of devotion shines clear in its wisdom and self-control, while the combined flood destroying the triple curse of humanity is absorbed in the mighty ocean of very Ráma. The united stream of the Mánas-born Sarjú and the Ganges purifies the pious listener, while the various tales and episodes interspersed here and there are the groves and gardens on its opposite banks ; the description of the marriage and wedding procession of Umá and Siva are like the innumerable fish in the water ; the joy and gladness that attended Ráma's birth are like beautiful swarms of bees and the ripple of the lake.

*Dohá* 49.

The childish sports of the four brothers are like the goodly lotus flowers ; the virtuous king and queen and their court like the bees and water-birds.

*Chaupái.*

The charming story of Síta's marriage like the bright gleam of the flashing river ; the many ingenious questions like the boats on the stream ; the appropriate and judicious answers like the boatmen ; again, the argumentative discussions show like crowding travellers ; the wrath of Bhrigunáth like the rushing torrent ; Ráma's soft speech like the well-arranged ghâts ; the marriage festivities of Ráma and Lakshman like the grateful swell of the tide ; the thrill of pleasure that spreads through the delighted audience like the ecstatic feelings of the virtuous bathers ; the auspicious preparations for marking Ráma's forehead with the *tilak* like the crowds assembled on holidays ; and like the river mud is Kaikeyi's evil counsel, the cause of many calamities.

*Dohá* 50.

Like prayers and sacrifices effectual to remove every misfortune are Bharat's virtuous acts; while the corruptions of the world, and sinful men, and slanderers are like the scum on the water and the cranes and crows.

*Chaupái.*

This river of glory is beautiful in each of the six seasons, bright and holy exceedingly at all times. The story of the marriage of Siva with the daughter of the snowy mountains is like the winter; the glad rejoicings at the Lord's birth are like the dewy season; the account of the preparations for Ráma's wedding are like the delightful and auspicious spring; Ráma's intolerable banishment is like the hot weather, and the story of his rough journeyings like the blazing sun and the wind; his encounters with fierce demons, by which he gladdens the hosts of heaven, are like the rains that refresh the fields; the prosperity of his reign, his meekness and greatness are like the clear, bountiful, and lovely autumn;[1] the recital of the virtues of Síta, that jewel of faithful wives, is as the undefiled and excellent water; the amiability of Bharat as its unvarying coolness.

*Dohá* 51.

Their looks and words at meeting, their mutual love and laughter, the true fraternal affection of the four brothers are as the water's sweet odour.

*Chaupái.*

My suppliant address and self-depreciation and modesty correspond to the singular lightness of good water, which is anything but a defect. This marvellous lymph works its effect by the mere hearing, quenching the thirst of desire and cleansing the soul of impurity; it resuscitates true love to Ráma and puts an end to all the sin and sorrow of the world, draining life of its weariness, comforting with true comfort, destroying sin and pain and poverty and error, dispelling lust and passion and phrensy and infatuation, and promoting pure intelligence and detachment from the world. Those who

[1]The six Hindú seasons to which allusion is here made are Hemant, winter; Sisir, the early spring; Basant, the spring; Grishm, the hot weather; Varshá, the rains; and Sarad, the autumn.

reverently drink or bathe in this stream, from their soul is effaced all sin and distress ; those who do not cleanse their heart in it are wretches whom the world has ruined, turning back, hapless creatures ! like a panting deer that has seen a river in a mirage.

*Dohá* 52—54.

Thus have I declared to the best of my ability the virtues of this excellent water, and having plunged my own soul in it, and ever remembering Bhawáni and Sankara I proceed with my delectable story. I will first repeat in substance the original conversation, with the questions put by Bharadwája when he found the Muni Yájnavalkya ; and laying my soul at the lotus feet of Raghupati and thus securing his patronage, I will sing the meeting of the two great saints and their auspicious discourse.

*Chaupái* 55.

At Prayág lives the saint Bharadwája, devoted beyond measure to Ráma's feet, a self-restrained ascetic full of sobriety and benevolence, supremely skilled in divine knowledge. In the month of Mágh, when the sun enters the sign of Capricorn, every one visits this chief of holy places; gods, demi-gods, *kinnars*, and men in troupes, all devoutly bathe in the triple flood and worship the lotus feet of Mádhava, while they have the happiness of touching the imperishable fig-tree. At Bharadwája's hallowed hermitage—so charming a spot that even the saint loved it—is ever a concourse of seers and sages, come to bathe at the holiest of all holy places; and having with gladness performed their ablutions at break of day they converse together on the glories of Hari :

*Dohá* 55.[1]

Discussing the nature of the deity, the kinds of religious observance and the classification of primordial entities; and declaring faith in God to be the epitome of wisdom and spiritual detachment.

[1]This couplet sums up the characteristics of the principal systems of Hindú philosophy: the Vedánta being chiefly concerned with, and indeed defined as, *Brahma Jijnása*, 'an enquiry into the nature of God;' the Mimánsa being a system of ritualism and Vedic observances; the Sankhya being 'a synthetic enumeration' of the primary germs or elements out of which creation has been evolved ; and the later eclectic Vaishnava school declaring that the only one thing needful is *bhakti*, πίστις, 'religious faith.'

*Chaupái* 56.

In this manner bathing regularly all through the festival, they again return each to his own cell, and every year there is a similar rejoicing when the saints meet for the annual ablution. On one occasion when the bathing time was over, and all the holy men had left, Bharadwája clasped by the feet and detained the supremely wise saint Yájnavalkya, and having reverently laved his lotus feet and seated him on a pre-eminent throne, he with religious ceremony extolled the saint's glory, and finally thus addrest him in mildest of tones: Sir, I have a great doubt, while in your grasp are all the mysteries of the Veda; I am afraid and ashamed to speak, but if I speak not, I lose a great opportunity.

*Dohá* 56.

In this wise, Sir, the saints all say and the Vedas and Puránas all have sung that there is no sound wisdom in his breast who conceals aught from his ghostly father.

*Chaupái* 57.

Remembering this, I lay bare my folly—take pity, my lord, on your faithful servant and dispel it. The might of Ráma's name is immeasurable—so tell the saints, the Puránas and the Vedic commentaries—the immortal Sambhu, who is the lord Siva, the perfection of wisdom and goodness, is ever repeating it; though all the four groups of animate beings in the world attain to salvation if they die in his city Kási, yet, O king of saints, such is the virtue of Ráma's name that even Siva in his compassion enjoins it as a charm. I ask of you, my lord, who is this Ráma? be gracious enough to instruct me. There is one Ráma, the prince of Avadh, whose acts are known throughout the world, who suffered infinite distress by the loss of his wife, and waxing wroth slew Rávan in battle.

*Dohá* 57.

Is it this Ráma, my lord, or another, whose name Tripurári is ever repeating? Ponder the matter well and tell me, O wisest and most faithful of men.

*Chaupái* 58.

Tell me the whole history in full, my master, so that my strong delusion may be dissipated. Said Yájnavalkya with a smile: All

the glory of Raghupati is known to you ; you are a votary of his in heart, word, and deed, and I understand your stratagem. Wishing to hear the marvellous tale of Ráma's virtues, you have questioned me with an affectation of great simplicity. Listen then, my son, with devout attention while I repeat the fair legend, which vanquishes every monstrous error, as dread Devi vanquished the demon Mahishásur, but which is drunk in by the saints as the light of the moon by the *chakor*. When a similar doubt was suggested by Bhawáni, Mahádev then replied.

*Dohá* 58.

And I now, as best I can, repeat their conversation, noting both its time and occasion ; on hearing it, my friend, all difficulties vanish.

*Chaupái* 59.

Once upon a time, in the second age of the world, Sambhu went to Rishi Agastya : with him went the mother of the world, the faithful Bhawáni. The hermit made obeisance ; for he recognized them as the sovereigns of the universe, and recited the story of Ráma, with which Mahádev was delighted ; then asked the hermit about true faith in Hari, and found in Sambhu a master to reply. In such converse the mountain lord Mahádev passed some days there, but finally took his leave and returned home with the daughter of Daksha. At that time there became incarnate, in the family of Raghu, Hari the destroyer of the burdens of the world, who at his father's word sorrowfully left the throne and wandered, immortal god though he was, in the Dandaka forest.

*Dohá* 59.

Siva kept pondering as he went : How can I obtain a sight of him? for every one knows that the lord has become incarnate secretly.

*Sorathá* 59.

In Sankar's heart was a great tumult, but Sati did not comprehend the mystery ; says Tulsi, the hope of an interview filled his soul with agitation and his eyes with wistfulness.

*Chaupái* 60.

Rávan has obtained the boon of death at the hands of man only and the lord has willed Brahma's word to come true. If I do not go to meet him, I shall ever regret it: but all that he could do, he could not hit upon a plan. At the very time that he was thus lost in thought, the ten-headed Rávan taking with him the vile Maricha all at once assumed the form of a false deer and treacherously in his folly carried off Síta, not knowing the lord's great power. When Ráma returned with his brother from the chase and saw the empty hermitage his eyes filled with tears; like a mortal man distressed by the loss of his mistress, he wanders through the forest in search of her, he and his brother; and he who knows neither union nor separation manifested all the pangs of parting.

*Dohá* 60.

Ráma's ways are most mysterious; only the supremely wise can comprehend them; the dull of soul and the sensual imagine something quite different.

*Chaupái* 61.

Then it was that Sambhu saw Ráma, and great joy arose in his soul. His eyes were filled with the vision of the most beautiful, but it was no fitting time to make himself known, and he passed on exclaiming: Hail, Supreme Being, redeemer of the world. But as he went on his way with Sati, his whole body thrilled with delight: and in Sati's soul when she observed her lord's emotion a great doubt arose: To Sankara, the universally adored and sovereign lord, gods, men, and saints all bow the head, yet he has made obeisance to this prince, saluting him as the Supreme God, and is so enraptured with his beauty that it is only to-day he has felt what love is.

*Dohá* 61.

The omnipresent and unbegotten God, the Creator, who has neither parts nor passions, and is no respecter of persons, whom not even the Veda can comprehend, has taken the form of a man.

*Chaupái* 62.

But according to what Siva says, though Vishnu in heaven's behalf assumes a human shape, he remains all-wise; yet here like a

silly woman he is hunting about, this fountain of wisdom, this Lord of Lakshmi, this vanquisher of demons. Still Sambhu's words cannot be false, nor can his knowledge be gainsaid. Thus an infinite doubt has come into my mind, and there is no way of solving it. Although Bhawáni did not speak out, Mahádev can read the heart and knew her thoughts, and said: Listen to me, Sati; you are just like a woman; but you should not entertain these doubts; this is that Ráma, my special patron, whose story was sung by the Rishi Agastya; in whom I exhorted the saint to have faith, and who is ever worshipped by seers and sages.

*Chhand* 2.

Seers and sages, saints and hermits fix on him their reverend gaze,
And in faint and trembling accents Holy Scripture hymns his praise.
He, the omnipresent spirit, Lord of heaven and earth and hell,
Freely, to redeem his people, has vouchsafed with men to dwell.

*Soratha* 6.

Though he spoke thus time after time, his words made no impression upon her; and at last Mahádev, recognizing Ráma's deceptive power, smiled and said:

*Chaupái* 62.

As the doubt in your mind is so great that it will not leave you till you have put the fact to the test, I will stay here in the shade of this fig-tree till you come back to me, after having evolved some stratagem by which to satisfy your overpowering doubt. So Sati went by Siva's order, saying to herself: Come now, what shall I do? while Sambhu reflected: There is something wrong with Sati, as her doubts are not removed by what I tell her; but no good can be wrought against the will of fate; whatever Ráma has ordained will come to pass; so why spin out an argument on suppositions. So saying he began the repetition of Hari's name, while Sati drew nigh to the Lord of grace.

*Doha* 62.

After many an anxious thought she assumed the form of Síta and went and stood in the way where the king of heaven was coming.

*Chaupái* 63.

When Lachhman saw her in her disguise, he was much astonished and perplext. Wise as he was, he could say nothing, but discreetly waited for the revelation of the Lord. He, the heavenly king, detected the deceit; for he sees all things alike and knows the heart, the all-wise lord Ráma, the very thought of whom disperses error. Yet even him Sati attempted to deceive—see how inveterate woman's nature is. But Ráma acknowledging the effect of his own delusive power, with a sweet smile and folded hands saluted her, mentioning both her own name and that of her father, and added: Where is Mahádev, and why are you wandering alone in the forest?

*Dohá* 63.

When she heard these simple but profound words, a great awe came upon her and she returned to Mahádev, full of fear and distress.

*Chaupái* 64.

I would not listen to Sankar, but must go and expose my folly to Ráma; now what answer can I give? Her distress was most grievous. Then Ráma, perceiving her vexation, manifested in part his glory, and as Sati went on her way she beheld a marvellous vision; in front of her were Ráma, Síta, and Lachhman; when again she looked back, there too she saw the Lord with his brother and Síta in beauteous apparel; whichever way she turned her eyes there was the Lord enthroned with saints and learned doctors ministering to him. Innumerable Sivas, and Bráhmas, and Vishnus, each excelling in majesty, bowing at his feet and doing homage; all the host of heaven with their different attributes.

*Dohá* 64.

Sati too and Sarasvati and Lakshmi in marvellous multiplicity of form, according to the various appearances assumed by their Lords, Bráhma, Vishnu, and Mahádev.

*Chaupái* 65.

Each separate vision of Ráma was attended by all the gods and their wives, and by the whole animate creation with all its

multitudinous species. But while the adoring gods appeared in diverse dresses, there was no diversity of form in Ráma. Though she saw many Rámas, and with him an oft-repeated Síta, it was always the same Ráma, the same Lachhman, and the same Síta. Sati was awe-stricken as she gazed; with fluttering heart and unconscious frame she closed her eyes and sank upon the ground. When again she looked up, she saw nothing, and oft bowing her head at Ráma's feet, she returned to the spot where Mahádev was waiting for her.

*Dohá* 65.

When she drew near, he smiled and asked if all were well, saying: Tell me now the whole truth, how did you put him to the test?

*Chaupái* 66.

Sati remembered the glory of the Lord and in her awe concealed the truth from Siva, saying: O sir, I tried no test, but like you simply made obeisance. I was confident that what you said could not be false. Then Sankar perceived by contemplation and understood all that Sati had done, and bowed to the might of Ráma's delusive power, which had been sent forth to put a lying speech into Sati's mouth. The will of Heaven and Fate are strong: thus he reflected, in great distress of mind; as Sati has taken Síta's form, if now I regard her as my wife, my devotion will be at an end, and it will be a sin to me.

*Dohá* 66.

My love is too great to be forgotten, yet to indulge it is criminal. He uttered not a word aloud, but in his heart was sore distress.

*Chaupái* 67.

At last having bowed his head at Ráma's feet and meditated on his name, he thus resolved and made a vow in his mind: 'So long as Sati remains as she is now, I will never touch her.' With this firm determination he turned homewards repeating his Ráma rosary, and as he went there was a jubilant cry in the heaven: Glory to thee, Mahádev, for thy staunch devotion; who other but thou, O lord most strong in faith, would make such a vow. Sati was troubled when she heard the heavenly voice and tremblingly asked Siva: Tell

me, O true and gracious Lord, what was the vow. But though she asked once and again he told her not.

*Dohá* 67.

Then she guessed of herself: The all-wise has discovered it all, though I attempted to deceive him—silly and senseless woman that I am.

*Soratha* 7.

Water and milk if mixed together are both sold as milk; but see how like the union is to that of lovers; the introduction of a drop of acid, or of a lie, at once causes a separation.

*Chaupái* 68.

Deep in thought and reflecting on what she had done, no words could express her infinite sorrow, and she kept saying to herself: The gracious but impenetrable Siva has not openly mentioned my offence, but my lord has abandoned me. Thus disturbed in soul by Sankar's sternness and thinking of her sin, she could say nothing, but all the more smouldered within like a furnace. When Mahádev saw her so sorrowful he began to amuse her with pleasant tales, relating various legends all the way till he came to Kailás. Then recalling his vow, he seated himself under a fig-tree in the attitude of contemplation and by an immediate control of all his members passed into a long and unbroken trance.[1]

*Dohá* 68.

Then Sati dwelt on Kailás, sorrowing grievously; not a soul knew her secret, but each day that she passed was like an age.

*Chaupái* 69.

Ever growing more sick at heart: When shall I emerge from this sea of troubles? I who put a slight upon Ráma and took my husband's word to be a lie. The creator has repaid me and has

[1]Literally translated the above passage would stand thus:—"Vrisha Ketu, perceiving that Sati was distrest, began to amuse her with pleasant tales, relating various legends all the way till Visvanáth arrived at Kailás. Then recalling his vow, Sambhu seated himself under a fig-tree in the attitude of contemplation and by an immediate control of all his members Sankara passed into a long and unbroken trance." As the use of so many different names, Vrisha Ketu, Visvanáth, Sambhu, and Sankara—all to designate the same person, viz., Mahádev—is likely to perplex an English reader, I have in this and similar passages omitted them and simply substituted the personal pronoun.

done as I deserved. Now, O God, think not thus within thyself that I can live without Sankara. The anguish of my heart is beyond words, but I take comfort when I remember Ráma, whom men call the lord of compassion, and whom the Vedas hymn as the remover of distress. Him I supplicate with folded hands. May this body of mine be speedily dissolved. As my love for Siva is unfeigned in thought, word, and deed, and as his word cannot fail,

*Dohá* 69.

Do thou, O impartial Lord, hear my prayer and speedily devise a plan by which I may die without pain and avoid this intolerable calamity.

*Chaupái* 70.

Thus sorrowing and weighed down by grievous and unutterable pain, the royal lady had passed 87,000 years, when the immortal Sambhu awoke from his trance, and began to repeat Ráma's name. Then Sati perceived that he had returned to consciousness and went and bowed herself at his feet. He gave her a seat in his presence and began reciting the divine praises. Now at that time Daksha was king, and the Creator seeing him to be thoroughly fit had made him a king of kings. But when he had obtained great dominion he waxed exceeding proud. Never was a man born into the world whom kingship did not intoxicate.

*Dohá* 70.

By the priests' suggestion all began preparing a great sacrifice for Daksha, and the gods who accept oblations were all courteously invited to attend.

*Chaupái* 71.

Kinnars, Serpents, Saints, Gandharvas, all the gods and their wives, except Vishnu, Bráhma, and Mahádev, proceeded thither in their chariots. When Sati saw the strangely beautiful procession going through the sky, and heard the melodious singing of the heavenly nymphs, she could not attend to her sainted lord's recital, but put a question to him, whereupon he explained. Then was she glad when she heard of her father's sacrifice and thought: If my lord will allow me, I will make it an excuse for going to stay a few days

with him. Though it was sore pain to leave her lord, she does not speak of it, knowing she was wrong, but with a soft and timid voice overflowing with modesty and affection said:

*Dohá* 71.

There is great rejoicing at my father's house; with my gracious lord's permission I will duteously go and see it.

*Chaupái.*

Said he, 'It would please me well; but there is a difficulty, as you have not been invited. Daksha has summoned all his other daughters, but has left you out on account of his quarrel with me. For he took offence at my behaviour in Brahma's court, and that is the reason he slights me to-day. If you go without being asked you will lose temper, love, and honour. One may go no doubt without an invitation to the house of a friend, or master, or father, or confessor, but no good can result from going where an enemy is present.' Thus Sambhu warned her over and over again; but fate was too strong, she would not be convinced. Said the lord: 'To go unasked is not right, as I take it.'

*Dohá* 72.

When Mahádev saw that no amount of talking would make her stay, he appointed his chief ministers as her escort and allowed her to depart.

*Chaupái.*

When Bhawáni came to her father's house, from fear of Daksha no one greeted her; only her mother met her kindly and her sisters received her with a smile. Daksha uttered not a word of salutation and burned with rage to see her. When Sati went to look at the sacrifice, she could nowhere find anything for Sambhu: then Sankara's words came back into her mind and her heart so burned within her at the slight upon her lord, that the former pain she had felt was not to be compared to her present emotion. There are many grievous pains in the world, but nothing so bad as a family slight. The more she thought of it, the more furious she grew, though her mother tried hard to pacify her.

*Dohá* 73.

This insult to Siva could not be borne ; her soul refused to be pacified ; and thrusting away from her the shrinking crowd, she cried in wild accents:

*Chaupái.*

Hear, all ye elders of the assembly, who have talked over this slight upon Sankara. Speedily shall ye reap your due reward, and dearly shall my father rue it. Whenever blasphemy is spoken against the saints, or Sambhu, or Vishnu, the ordinance is either to cut out the blasphemer's tongue, if it is in your power, or else to close your ears and run away. The universal spirit, the great Lord, Purári, the father of the world, the friend of all, he it is whom my besotted father has reviled. Therefore this body of mine, begotten of his seed, I hasten to abandon, and impress on my soul the image of him who bears the moon as his crest and a bull as his device. As she thus spoke the flames consumed her body ; a great cry of lamentation went up from the whole assembly.

*Dohá* 74.

When Sambhu's attendants heard of Sati's death they began to destroy all the sacrificial offerings; but the great saint Bhrigu, seeing the destruction, came and saved them.

*Chaupái.*

When Sambhu got the news he sent Bírbhadra in his wrath, who went and scattered the sacrifice and requited all the gods as they deserved. Daksha's act is famous throughout the world as an example of hostility to Sambhu ; and as the story is so well known, I have told it in brief. Sati at her death asked this boon of Hari, that in every successive birth she might show her love to Siva. On this account she was born in the form of Párvati, as the daughter of King Himálaya. From the time that she entered the house of the monarch of mountains it was pervaded by fortune and prosperity, and hermits made their homes all about it, in fit places assigned them by the king.

*Dohá* 75.

Strange trees of many kinds, with never-failing flowers and fruits, appeared on the beautiful hills, and mines of jewels were discovered.

*Chaupái.*

All the rivers flowed with the purest water; birds, deer, and bees were all equally joyous; every animal forgot its instinctive antipathies and dwelt lovingly on the mountain, which was as glorified by Girijá's coming as a man is glorified by the spirit of faith. Every day was some new delight in the king's palace, and Brahma and all the gods vied in singing its praises. On hearing the news, Nárad went to visit the mountain king, who received him with high honour and bathed his feet and led him to a throne. The queen too bowed her head before him and sprinkled the whole house with the water sanctified by his use. Then the king told all his good fortune and summoned his daughter also to the presence and said:

*Dohá* 76.

Thou who knowest all time, past, present, or future, and who hast traversed the whole universe, tell me, best of saints, after well considering the matter, what there is good and what bad about my daughter.

*Chaupái.*

The saint replied with a smile in soft but profound words: Your daughter is a mine of perfection, beautiful, amiable, and intelligent, whether she be called Umá, or Ambiká, or Bhaváni; a maiden with every quality that endears a wife to a husband. Firm as a rock her good fortune, and inher her parents are blessed; she shall be worshipt throughout the whole world, and in her service shall be fruition of every desire. Through her name woman will embrace the crowning act of conjugal devotion, though it cut like a sword. Such, O king, are thy daughter's merits; but you have now to hear two or three drawbacks. A person who has neither beauty nor dignity, without father or mother, an ascetic with no thought for any one,

*Dohá* 77.

A mendicant recluse with matted hair, a celibate with naked body and hideous accompaniments, such a one shall be her lord, as I read by the lines on her palm.

*Chaupái.*

When the father and mother heard the saint's words, and knew they must be true, they became sad; but Umá rejoiced; nor did Nárad understand, when all seemed affected alike, that the motive was different. All Girijá's attendants, and she herself and her father and her mother Maina were trembling and had their eyes full of tears; but Umá cherished the saint's words in her heart, saying: They cannot be false: and her love for Siva's lotus feet revived; though the doubt remained, How difficult to find him! But as it was no fitting time for a disclosure, she suppressed her emotion and went back to the bosom of her playmates. They and the parents were distrest by the thought of the saint's infallible utterance, and the king with an effort cried aloud: O sir, tell me what remedy to devise.

*Dohá* 78.

Said the saint: Hear, O Himavant; what fate has written on the forehead, nor god nor demon, man, serpent, nor saint, is able to efface.

*Chaupái.*

Yet one mode of escape I will tell you, which by the help of heaven may avail. Umá's bridegroom will infallibly be such a one as I have described to you; but all the bad points that I have enumerated I find to exist in Siva. If a marriage with him can be brought about, every one will account his vices as virtues. Though Hari takes a serpent for his couch, the wise account it no fault in him; though fire and the sun consume everything they come across, no one attributes it to stupidity on their part; though the stream flows in one place pure and in another sullied, no one would call the Ganges impure. The powerful, my friend, are always faultless, like the sun, or fire, or the Ganges.

*Dohá* 79.

The fool who in the pride of knowledge draws a parallel, saying 'it is the same for a god or a man,' shall be cast into hell for as long as the world lasts.

*Chaupái.*

Though they know that wine is made of Ganges water, yet saints will never taste it; but the Ganges itself, wherever found, is

always pure; and herein is seen the difference between mastery and subjection.[1] The lord Sambhu is all-powerful and an alliance with him is in every way auspicious. But it is hard to propitiate him ; yet if penance is undergone he is quickly satisfied. If then your daughter will practise penance, Tripurári will be able to erase the lines of fate ; and though there may be many bridegrooms in the world, the only one for her is Siva, and none else. He answers prayer, relieves the distress of the faithful, is full of compassion and a delight to his servants ; unless he is propitiated, no one will attain his heart's desire, though he practise infinite penance and austerity.

*Dohá* 80.

So saying, and with his thoughts fixed on Hari, Nárad gave his blessing to the king and added : Now fear not, all will turn out well.

*Chaupái.*

Having thus spoken, the saint returned to Brahma's court. Hear now the end of the story how it came about. Maina finding her husband alone said to him : My lord, I do not understand the saint's meaning. If the bridegroom and his position and family are unobjectionable, then make such a marriage as befits your daughter ; but if not, let her remain a maiden : for, my lord, Umá is as dear to me as life. If she does not get a husband worthy of her, every one will say the king is an utter dolt. Remember this, and so marry her that there may be no heartburning hereafter. With these words she laid her head at his feet. The king affectionately replied : This very month an unexceptionable bridegroom will appear ; Nárad's word cannot be gainsaid.

*Dohá* 81.

Put away all anxiety, my dear, and fix your thoughts on the good God, who has created Párvati and who will protect her.

*Chaupái.*

Now, if you have any love for your child, go and thus admonish her : Penance is the means of approach to Siva, and there is no

[1]The meaning is : wine, though made of Ganges water, is still impure; but the Ganges itself is always pure, even though wine may have been poured into it.

other way of escaping sorrow. Nárad's words are pregnant and full of meaning: Mahádev is in fact beautiful and accomplished; recognize this truth and doubt not: he is in every way irreproachable. When she heard her husband's words she was glad of heart and at once rose and went where Umá was. On seeing the girl her eyes filled with tears, and she affectionately took her in her lap and again and again pressed her to her bosom, but could not say a word for the choking in her throat. Then the mother of the universe, the all-wise Bhaváni, her mother's delight, said softly:

*Dohá* 82.

Listen, mother, to the vision I am about to tell you; a fair and lovely Bráhman prince has thus instructed me:

*Chaupái.*

Go, mountain maid, and practise penance, reflecting that Nárad's words are infallibly true. Your parents too are pleased with the idea, for penance is full of peace and puts an end to pain and sin. By the virtue of penance the Creator made the world; by the virtue of penance Vishnu redeems the world; by the virtue of penance Sambhu destroys it. The whole creation, Bhaváni, depends upon penance; do you then practise it. On hearing these words her mother was astounded, and sent for the king and declared to him the vision. Then, after consoling her parents in every possible way, Umá in gladness of heart commenced her penance; while they and all their loving dependants grew sad of face, nor could speak a word.

*Dohá* 83.

Then came Vedasiras[1] and instructed them all; and when they had heard of Párvati's glory they were comforted.

*Chaupái.*

But Umá, cherishing in her heart the feet of her dear lord, went into the forest and began her penance. Though her delicate frame was little fit for such austerities, she abandoned all food and became absorbed in prayer, her devotion so growing day by day that all bodily wants were forgotten, and her soul was wholly given to

[1]Vedasiras, a son of Márkandeya and Múrdhanyá, was, by his wife Pívari, the progenitor of the Bhargava Bráhmans.

penance. For a thousand years she ate only roots and fruit; for a hundred years she lived on vegetables; for some days her only sustenance was water and air, and on some she maintained a yet more absolute fast. For three thousand years she ate only dry leaves of the *bel*[1] tree that had fallen to the ground, and at last abstained even from dry leaves, whence she acquired the name of *aparna* ('the leafless'). At the sight of her emaciated frame, Brahma's deep voice resounded through the heavens:

*Dohá* 84.

"Hear, daughter of the mountain king! your desire is accomplished; cease all these intolerable afflictions: Tripurári will soon be yours.

*Chaupái.*

"Though there have been many saints both resolute and wise, not one, Bhawáni, has performed such penance as this: accept now the divine oracle as ever true and ever good. When your father comes to call you, cease to resist, and go home with him; and when the seven sages meet you, know this to be the sign of the heavenly prediction." When she heard Brahma's voice thus speaking from on high, Girijá thrilled with delight. Now with her we have done for a time, while we turn to Sambhu. From the day when Sati's spirit left the body he became a rigid ascetic, ever telling his beads in Ráma's name, and attending the public recitations in his honour:

*Dohá* 85.

Even he, Siva, the pure intelligence, the abode of bliss, exempt from lust, frenzy, and delusion, wanders about on earth with his heart fixed on Hari, the joy of the whole world,

*Chaupái.*

Now instructing saints in wisdom, now expounding Ráma's praises, and though himself the all-wise and passionless Lord God, yet saddened by the sadness of a bereaved disciple. In this way many ages passed, while his love for Ráma daily increased. Then the generous and merciful god, full of grace and benignity, seeing his steadfastness and affection, and the unchangeable stamp of

[1]The *bel* tree (*Ægle Marmelos*) is specially sacred to Siva.

devotion on his soul, became manifest in all his glory and lauded him highly, for none other had ever accomplished such a vow. In diverse ways he instructed him, telling him of Párvati's birth and of her virtuous deeds, all at full length, in his infinite compassion.

*Dohá* 86.

"Now, Siva, if you have any love for me, listen to my request: go and marry the mountain maid and do as I ask you."

*Chaupái.*

Said Siva, "Though it is scarcely seemly, yet when a master speaks he is not to be gainsaid. I must needs bow to your order, for obedience is the highest duty. If a man would prosper, he must do, without thinking, as he is told by his parents, or his confessor, or his superior: you are in every way my benefactor, and I bow to your commands." The lord was pleased when he heard Sankara's reply so full of faith, knowledge, and religious feeling, and said, "Hara, your vow stands good; take to heart what I have told you." So saying he vanished, but the vision remained impressed in Sankara's soul. Then came the seven Rishis to visit him, and he addressed them thus in pleasant wise:

*Dohá* 87.

"Go to Párvati and make trial of her love, and then send her father to fetch her home and remove all his doubts."

*Chaupái.*

When the Rishis saw Gauri, she seemed to them like Penance personified, and they cried, "Hear, O daughter of the mountain! Why practise such grievous self-mortification? What has been the sin, or what is the aim? Tell us the whole secret truly." When Bhawáni heard their speech she replied in strangely moving terms: "I greatly shrink from telling my secret, for you will smile at my folly when you hear it; but my soul is obstinately set and refuses to hear instruction, though I am like one building a house upon the water, or as one who would fly without wings, relying only on the truth of Nárada's prophecy. See, O saints, the extent of my madness. I long for the unchangeable Sankara as my husband."

*Dohá* 88.

The Rishis smiled on hearing her speech, and said: "You are moulded like the parent rock; but tell me who has ever listened to Nárada's advice and had a home?

*Chaupái.*

"Did he not advise Daksha's sons? and they never saw their father's house again. It was he, too, who ruined Chitraketu's family, and also Hiranya Kasipu's.[1] Whoever listens to Nárada's advice, be it man or woman, is certain to become a homeless beggar. Seemingly pious, but deceitful at heart, he would make every one like himself. And now you are led away by his words, and are longing to marry a very outcast, a worthless, shameless, tattered wretch, with a necklace of serpents and skulls, and without either family, or house, or even clothes. Tell me, now, what pleasure is to be had from such a bridegroom as this? Better forget the ravings of the impostor. For he married Sati only because other people suggested it, and soon abandoned her and left her to die.

*Dohá* 89.

"And now he never gives her a thought, but goes about a begging, and eats and sleeps at his ease. What respectable woman could ever stay with such a confirmed solitary?

[1]It was by Nárada's advice that the sons of Daksha were dissuaded from multiplying their race, and scattered themselves all over the world in the hope of acquiring knowledge. Not one of them ever returned, and the unhappy father, thus deserted by all his children, denounced as a curse upon Nárada that he, too, should always be a homeless wanderer on the face of the earth.

King Chitraketu was childless, though he had a thousand wives. At last, by the blessing of a saint, one of them bore him a son; but when it was a year old they all conspired together and poisoned it. The king was weeping sorely with the dead child in his arms, when Nárada came and after much persuasion consented to restore it to life. It at once sat up and began to speak, saying that in a former state of existence it had been a king, who had retired from the world into a hermitage. There one day a woman in charity gave him a cake of fuel, which he put on the fire without perceiving that there were in it a thousand little ants. These innocent creatures all perished in the flames, but were born again in a more exalted position as Chitraketu's wives; while the woman who gave the fuel, and the hermit who used it, became the mother and the child, whom inexorable fate had thus punished for their former sinful inadvertence. After finishing this explanation the child again fell back dead, and Chitraketu, giving up all hope of an heir abandoned the throne and began a course of penance.

When Kayádhu, the wife of the demon-king Hiranya Kasipu, was about to bring forth she received instruction from the sage Nárada, whose words reached even to the ears of the child in her womb. Accordingly from the moment he was born he devoted himself to the service of Vishnu, and thus provoked his impious father to the acts of persecution which resulted in his own destruction and the extinction of his royal line.

*Chaupái.*

"To-day if you will hear my words, I have thought of an excellent bridegroom for you, so beautiful and honourable, so pleasant and amiable, that even the Veda hymns his praise—the faultless and all-perfect lord of Lakshmi, who reigns at Vaikuntha. He is the husband that I will bring you." On hearing this Bhaváni smiled and replied, "You said true that I inherit a rock-nature, and would sooner die than yield. Gold, again, is another product of the rock that cannot be changed by any amount of burning. Nor will I change my faith in Nárada's word; whether my house be full or desolate, I fear not: whoever doubts the word of his spiritual adviser must never dream of obtaining either happiness or riches.

*Dohá* 90.

"Mahádeva is full of faults, while Vishnu is all-perfect: but love is governed by caprice.

*Chaupái.*

"If, reverend sirs, I had met you sooner, I would have submitted to your advice; but now that I have given my life for Sambhu, it is too late to weigh his merits and defects. If you are firmly resolved and cannot rest without making a match, there is no dearth of lovers; the world is full of young men and maidens; but as for me, though I hold out for a million lives, I will either wed Sambhu or remain a virgin. I will not forget Nárada's admonition, who told me again and again of Mahádeva. I, who am styled the mother of the world, fall at your feet and bid you return home; your time is lost." When the sages beheld her devotion they cried, "Glory, glory, glory to the great mother Bhaváni,

*Dohá* 91.

"United as Mayá to the god Siva, the parents of the universe!" then bowing their heads at her feet and thrilling with rapture they left,

*Chaupái.*

And sent King Himavant, and with many entreaties brought Girijá back. When they returned to Siva and told him Umá's whole history, he was delighted to hear of her affection, and they

went gladly home. Then the all-wise Sambhu, firmly directing his intention, began a meditation on Ráma. Now at that time was a demon Táraka, of gigantic strength of arm and high renown, who had subdued the sovereigns of every region, and despoiled the gods of all their happiness. Knowing neither age nor death, he was invincible; and the powers of heaven were vanquished in innumerable battles At last they all went and cried to the Creator, and he seeing them so dismayed,

*Dohá* 92.

Reassured them, saying: "The demon shall die when a son is born of the seed of Sambhu, who shall conquer him in fight."

*Chaupái.*

"Having heard what I say, devise a plan by which such a lord may arise and assist you. After Sati quitted the body at Daksha's sacrifice she was born again as the daughter of the Himálaya, and has been practising penance in the hope of obtaining Sambhu to husband. He, on the other hand, has left all, and sits absorbed in contemplation. Though the disparity is great, yet list to what I propose. Send Káma, the god of love, to Siva to agitate his soul, and then I will approach with bowed head and arrange the marriage, and in this way your object will be attained." All exclaimed that the plan was good, and heartily applauded it. Then came the god with the five arrows and the fish-standard.

*Dohá* 93.

And they told him their distress. He heard, and after reflecting a little replied with a smile, "Sambhu's displeasure will work me no good,

*Chaupái.*

"Yet I will do you this service. The scriptures say charity is the highest of virtues, and one who gives his life for another is ever the praise of the saints." So saying he bowed and took his leave, he and his attendant,[1] with his bow of flowers in his hand. And as he went he thought within himself: Siva's displeasure will surely be my death. Therefore he hastened to exhibit his power, and for

[1]Kámadeva's attendant is Riturája, or Basanta, the spring season.

a time reduced to subjection the whole world. If Love is provoked, the stepping-stones of the law are swept away in a moment; religious vows and obligations, self-control, ceremonial observances, knowledge and philosophy, virtuous practices, prayer, penance, self-mortification, the whole spiritual army, is panic-stricken and put to flight.

*Chhand* 3.

Virtue's grand force is routed in panic and dismay,
And in dark nooks of holy books her champions skulk away.
Great god of fate! in this dread state what saving power is nigh?
'Gainst man's one heart Love's five-fold dart wins easy victory.

*Dohá* 94.

Every creature in the world, animate or inanimate, male or female, forgot natural restraint and became subject to love.

*Chaupái.*

In every heart was a craving for love: the tree bent its boughs to kiss the creeper; the overflowing river ran into the arms of ocean; lakes and ponds effected a meeting. And when such was the case with inanimate creation, what need to speak of man? Beasts on land and birds in the air, under the influence of love, were unmindful of time and season; all were agitated and blind with desire, and the swan regarded neither night nor day.[1] Gods, demons, men, *kinnaras*, serpents, ghosts, witches, goblins, and imps were all at once enslaved by love; even saints and hermits, sages and ascetics became again sensual under his influence.

*Chhand* 4.

When saints and hermits own his sway, why speak of serf and thrall?
God's whole creation, recreant grown, swore Love was all in all;
Each jocund dame, each amorous swain, found heaven in love's embrace:
Two hours sped past, Love still stood fast and reigned in Brahma's place.

[1]The male and female *chakwa* (swan, or rather Bráhmani duck) are doomed for ever to nocturnal separation, and are said to pass the night on the opposite banks of a river, vainly calling to each other to cross. During love's brief triumph the curse was for once removed.

*Soratha* 8.

None is so bold but Love steals his heart, and only they whom Ráma protects can then escape.

*Chaupái.*

For two hours this triumph lasted, till Kámadeva drew nigh to Sambhu. On seeing him Love trembled, and the whole world returned to itself. Every living creature at once grew calm, as when a drunkard recovers from his drunkenness. When Love looked at Siva, the invincible and unapproachable god, he feared; then returned shame too strong for words, and, resolved upon death, he formed his plan of attack. Forthwith lusty Spring stepped forth, and every tree broke into blossom; wood and grove, lake and pond, every quarter of the heaven, gladdened and overflowed as it were with love, and even the deadest soul was quickened at the sight.

*Chhand* 5.

At Love's touch the dead were quickened, blossomed all the wood so dark,
While a breeze, soft, cool, and fragrant, fanned the love-enkindled spark.
Laughs the lake with many a lotus, hum the bees with drowsy sound,
Swans and parrots chatter gaily, gladly dance the nymphs around.

*Dohá* 95.

Though he tried every trick and manifold device, and triumphed over host and all, yet Siva's unbroken trance still continued, and Love grew furious.

*Chaupái.*

Seeing a mango tree with spreading boughs, he in his folly climbed up into it; then fitted a shaft to his flowery bow, and in his great passion taking aim and drawing the string home to the ear he let fly and lodged the five arrows in his breast. Then the trance was broken and Sambhu awoke. In the lord's soul was great agitation; he opened his eyes, and looking all round saw Kámadeva in the mango tree. At his wrath the three worlds trembled. Then Siva unclosed his third eye, and by its flash Kámadeva was reduced

to ashes. A confused cry went up through the universe from the gods in their dismay, from the demons in exultation ; the rich were sad when they remembered love's delights, while saints and hermits felt relieved of a thorn.[1]

*Chhand* 6.

The saints were freed from torment : but Ratí swooned for woe,
And in sad guise with weeping eyes at Siva's throne fell low,
Sore wailing and lamenting her dear lord's hapless fate ;
Till quick to pardon spoke the god in words compassionate :

*Dohá* 96.

"Henceforth, Ratí, your husband's name shall be called *Anang* (the bodiless), and thus etherealized he shall pervade all things. But hear how you will again find him hereafter :

*Chaupái.*

"When Krishna becomes incarnate in the family of Jadu to relieve the world of its burdens, your husband shall be born again as his son (Pradyumna) : this my word shall not fail." On hearing this prophecy of Sankara's, Ratí retired. I now turn to another part of my story. When Brahma and the other gods heard these tidings they first went to Vaikuntha, and thence, with Vishnu, Brahma, and all the rest, into the presence of the merciful Siva, and each of them separately sang his praises. Then the gracious power whose crest is the moon and whose standard a bull said : "Tell me, ye immortals, why ye have come." Said Brahma : "My lord, you can read our hearts, but as ordered I speak.

*Dohá* 97.

"In the mind of all the gods is one idea. Sankara is love-smitten, and we would fain with our own eyes see his marriage.

*Chaupái.*

"O destroyer of the pride of love, let us feast our eyes on this glad event. In granting a husband to Ratí after Kámadeva had been consumed you have done well, O sea of compassion, in punishment remembering mercy ; the great have ever an easy temper. Accept

[1]With this whole narrative compare that in the *Kumára Sambhava* of Kálidása.

now the interminable penance that Párvati has endured." On hearing Brahma's speech and perceiving its purport, he exclaimed joyfully, "So be it!" Then the gods sounded their kettledrums and rained down flowers, and cried "Victory, victory to the King of Heaven!" Then, perceiving it was the proper time, the seven sages came and were despatched by Brahma to the Himálaya, where first they sought Bhaváni, and addressed her in mild but deceptive terms:

*Dohá* 98.

"You would not listen to us, but rather took Nárada's advice; now again is your vow proved vain, for the god of love has been consumed by Mahádeva."

*Chaupái.*

Bhaváni replied with a smile, "O wisest of sages, you have said well. Your words 'Love has been consumed by Mahádeva' imply a belief that aforetime Sambhu was liable to change. But I know him to be from everlasting an ascetic, faultless, loveless, passionless: and if, knowing him to be such as he is, I have served him devotedly in heart, word, and deed, so gracious a lord (be assured, O sages) will bring my vow to accomplishment. Your saying that Hara has destroyed Love betrays great want of judgment. Fire, my friend, has an unalterable nature, and ice cannot exist near it; if brought near it must inevitably perish; and so must Love in the presence of Mahádeva."[1]

*Dohá* 99.

On hearing this speech and seeing her love and confidence, the sages were delighted and bowed the head before her, and went to King Himáchal

*Chaupái.*

And told him the whole history. When he heard of Love's destruction he was much distressed, but was again comforted when told of Ratí's promised husband. After pondering on the majesty

[1]The line thus translated stands in the original *Asi Manmatha Mahesa ko nái.* There is an entirely different reading in some copies, *jimi Sampáti nij pachchh ganwái,* "like Sampáti who lost his wings;" Sampáti being the brother of Jatáyu, who gave Hanumán information of Rávana's rape of Síta.

of Sambhu he reverently summoned the wise men, and at once had the day fixed according to Vedic prescription, selecting an auspicious date, and planet, and hour. Then he gave the letter to the seven sages, humbly falling at their feet, and they took it to Brahma, who could not contain himself for joy on reading it, but at once proclaimed it aloud. The whole company of heaven was delighted: there was music and a shower of flowers, and in every quarter festive preparations were commenced.

*Dohá* 100.

All the gods began adorning the different vehicles on which they ride abroad; the Muses sang for joy, and all was bliss and happiness.

*Chaupái.*

Siva's attendants began to dress their lord, arranging his serpent-crest and crown of matted locks; with snakes for his earrings and bracelets of snakes for his wrists; his body smeared with ashes, and a lion's skin about his loins; the moon on his brow, the lovely Ganges on the crown of his head, his eyes three in number, and a serpent for his Bráhmanical cord; his throat black with poison; a wreath of dead men's skulls about his breast: in such ghastly attire was arrayed the great god Siva. With trident in hand he advanced riding on a bull, while the drums beat and instruments of music were played. The female divinities all smiled to see him, and said, "The world has no bride worthy of such a lover." Vishnu and Brahma and all the company of heaven followed in the procession, each on his own carriage; they formed a wondrous sight, but were nothing compared to the bridegroom.

*Dohá* 101.

Then Vishnu with a smile cried to all the heavenly warders and said, "March separately, each one with his own retinue,

*Chaupái.*

"Otherwise on going into a strange city it will be a joke against us that the procession is a failure after the bridegroom." The gods smiled to hear this speech, and marched separately, each at the head of his own followers. Mahádeva smiled too, not

understanding Hari's joke, but taking it as a most friendly suggestion, and sent Bhringi to bring all his own company together. On receiving Siva's order they all came and bowed the head at his lotus feet. Then Siva laughed to see the host in their motley attire, riding every kind of vehicle ; some with monstrous heads, some with no head at all ; some with many hands and feet, and some with none ; some with great eyes, some with no eyes ; some very stout, some very slim.

*Chhand* 7.

All, stout or slim, or foul or trim, in gruesome panoply,
With skulls for wine-cups filled with blood, from which they quaffed with glee,
With head of dog, or ass, or hog, a host no tongue can tell,
Ghosts, goblins, witches, every kind of denizen of hell.

*Soratha* 9.

All the demons went singing and dancing with wonderful contortions, such as never were seen, and uttering all sorts of strange cries.

*Chaupái.*

Like bridegroom, like procession—an extraordinary sight as it went along the road. There King Himáchal erected a canopy more splendid than words can tell ; and every hill in the world, small and great, more than man can count, and every wood and sea, river, stream, and lake, all were invited to attend ; and assuming forms of exquisite beauty, with all their retinue, male and female, they flocked to the palace, singing songs of gladness. First of all the king had built a number of guest-houses, and so tastefully arranged them that after a glance at the beauty of the city the Creator of the world seemed a contemptible architect.

*Chhand* 8.

Little seemed the world's Creator, and his skill of nothing worth ;
Lake and fountain, grove and garden, shone more fair than aught on earth.
Wreaths and arches, flags and banners, made each house a goodly show ;
Gallant youths and lovely maidens set a saint's heart all aglow.

*Dohá* 102.

The city in which the Great Mother had taken birth surpassed description; joy, prosperity, and abundance were ever on the increase.

*Chaupái.*

When it was known that the marriage procession was close at hand, the stir in the city and the brilliancy of the decorations grew more and more. With numerous carriages and all due equipment the heralds started for the formal reception. When they saw the army of gods they were glad of heart, and yet more so when they beheld Hari. But when they perceived Siva's familiars, every beast they rode started back in affright. Grown men summoned up courage to stand, but the children all ran for their lives straight back home, and when their parents questioned them could only reply trembling all over, "What can we say? it is beyond telling; it is no marriage procession, but the army of death: the bridegroom a maniac mounted on a bull, with snakes and skulls and ashes to adorn him."

*Chhand* 9.

"Skulls and snakes and streaks of ashes, matted locks and body bare,
Witches, imps, and frightful goblins, and appalling ghosts are there.
Happy man who sees such horrors nor dies at once of fright!"
So from house to house they babbled on Umá's wedding night.

*Dohá* 103.

The fathers and mothers smiled, for they recognized Siva's familiars, and reassured the children in every possible way, saying, "Do not be afraid; there is no cause for fear."

*Chaupái.*

The heralds brought in the procession, and assigned them all pleasant quarters. And Maina, having prepared an elegant sacrificial lamp, and lustrous water in a golden bowl, proceeded with much gladness to move it round and round over Siva's head, while her attendants sang festive songs. When they saw his terrible attire the women feared greatly, and ran inside the house all of a tremble. Mahádeva advanced to the guest-room, and Maina, sorely grieved at heart, called her daughter and in the most loving manner

took her into her lap, while her lotus eyes overflowed with tears :— "To think that the Creator should have made you so beautiful, and then give you such a raving fool for a bridegroom !"

*Chhand* 10.

"How can God send such a raving groom for such a lovely bride ?
What a thorn-bush is our wishing-tree, the fruit for which we cried !
From mountain-top, in sea or fire, I cast me down with thee :
Welcome disgrace, so they be gone ; this wedding ne'er shall be."

*Dohá* 104.

All the ladies were distrest when they saw the queen so sad, who in her deep affection for her daughter began to weep and make great lamentation :

*Chaupái.*

"What harm had I done to Nárada that he should make my home desolate, and give Umá such advice, to undergo penance for the sake of a mad bridegroom ? In good sooth he is fancy-free and passionless, an ascetic who wants neither money, nor house, nor wife, and therefore in destroying another's home he has neither shame nor compunction ; for what does a barren woman know of the pangs of childbirth ?" When Bhaváni saw her mother's distress she answered thus placidly and discreetly, "Be not troubled, my mother, with these thoughts, for God's plans are unalterable. If fate decrees me a mad husband, then why should any one be blamed ? Can you blot out the handwriting of the Creator ? Then refrain from profitless reproaches."

*Chhand* 11.

"Cease from profitless reproaches, nor in vain bemoan my fate ;
I must go where'er my destined joys and sorrows for me wait."
Hearing Umá's pious answer, all her ladies felt surprise,
Much they talked of God's injustice, while the tears bedewed their eyes.

*Dohá* 105.

At that time came Nárada, and with him the sages (for they had heard the news), and at once betook themselves to the king's palace.

*Chaupái.*

Then Nárada instructed them all, and recited in full the past history, saying, "Hear, O Maina ! my words are true ; your daughter

is Bhaváni, the mother of the world, the everlasting Female Energy; without birth or beginning; Sambhu's inseparable half; the creator, supporter, and destroyer of the universe; who at will assumes the semblance of human form. First she was born in Daksha's house, Sati by name, of excellent beauty. Then as Sati she married Sankara, and her story is famous throughout the world, how once with Siva she met the sun of Raghu's lotus line (*i.e.* Ráma), and in her infatuation was not obedient to Siva, but was beguiled into assuming the form of Síta.

*Chhand* 12.

"For the crime of this assumption she was widowed many a day,
Till in the fire before her sire her sins were burnt away.
Now, born your daughter, for her lord in penitence she stayed;
And Siva aye shall be her lord; know this, nor be dismayed."

*Dohá* 106.

On hearing Nárada's explanation the sadness of all was dispersed, and in a moment his words were spread from house to house throughout the city.

*Chaupái.*

Then Maina and Himavant were glad and fell again and again at Párvati's feet. All the people of the city, whatever their age, men and women alike, were equally delighted. Songs of joy began to sound in the streets; golden vases were displayed; meats were dressed in various ways according to the rules of gastronomic science. But the banquet table of Bhaváni and her mother was altogether beyond description. The marriage guests—Vishnu, Brahma, and all the heavenly orders—were courteously entreated, and took their seats line after line. Then the skilful servers began to serve, and the women, when they found the gods were sat down, began to jest and banter in pleasant strain.

*Chhand* 13.

In pleasant strain with dark refrain they hint at love's delight:
Charmed with the song, the gods sit long, nor heed the waning night.
With growing zest each jovial guest prolongs the festive hour:
At last they rise; each bids adieu and seeks his separate bower.

*Dohá* 107.

Then the sages came and declared to Himavant the marriage proposal, and, seeing the time was fit, sent to summon all the gods,

*Chaupái.*

Whom he courteously addressed, and assigned to each an appropriate seat. An altar was prepared according to Vedic ritual, while the women chanted festal strains; and a divinely beautiful throne was erected, the handiwork of a god, beyond description. Then Siva, after bowing to the Bráhmans, took his seat, remembering in his heart his own lord, Ráma. Then the sages sent for Uma, who was brought in by her handmaids, richly adorned. All the gods beholding her beauty were enraptured. What poet in the world could describe such loveliness? The divinities, who recognized in her the universal mother, the spouse of Mahádeva, adored her in their inmost soul,—Bhaváni, the crown of beauty—whose praises would still be beyond me even though I had a myriad tongues.

*Chhand* 14.

A myriad tongues were all too few to sing her matchless grace;
Where gods and muses shrink abashed, for Tulsi's rhyme what place?
With downcast eyes the glorious dame passed up the hall, and fell,
Bee-like, at Siva's lotus feet, the lord she loved so well.

*Dohá* 108.

At the injunction of the priests, both Sambhu and Bhaváni paid divine honours to Ganes. And let no one be perplexed on hearing this, but know well that they are gods from everlasting.

*Chaupái.*

The whole marriage ceremony was performed by the priests in accordance with Vedic ritual, and the father, with *kusa* grass in his hand, took the bride and gave her to Siva. When the two had joined hands, all the gods were glad of heart; the chief priests uttered the scriptural formulæ, and the cry went up of "Glory, glory, glory to Sankara!" all kinds of music began to play, and flowers were rained down from heaven. Thus was accomplished the marriage of Hara and Girijá amidst general rejoicing. The dowry given defies description—men-servants and maid-servants,

horses, carriages, elephants, cows, raiment, jewellery, things of all sorts, and wagonloads of grain and golden vessels.

*Chhand* 15.

Thus great and more the dowry's store that King Himáchal brought;
Yet falling low at Siva's feet he cried that all was nought.
The gracious lord cheered his sad sire in every way most meet,
Then Maina came, most loving dame, and clasped his lotus feet:

*Dohá* 109.

"Umá, my lord, is dear to me as my own soul; take her as one of your servants, and pardon all her offences: this is the boon I beg of your favour."

*Champái.*

After Sambhu had in every possible way reassured his wife's mother, she bowed herself at his feet and went home, there called for Umá, and taking her into her lap gave her this excellent instruction:—"Be ever obedient to Sankara: to say 'My lord and my god' is the sum of all wifely duty." At these words her eyes filled with tears, and again and again she pressed her daughter to her bosom:—"Why has God created woman in the world, seeing that she is always in a state of subjection, and never can even dream of happiness?" Though utterly distracted by motherly love, she knew it was no time to display it, and restrained herself. Running to her again and again, and falling on the ground to clasp her feet, in a transport of affection beyond all words, Bhaváni said adieu to all her companions, and then again went and clung to her mother's breast.

*Chhand* 16.

Still clinging to her mother's breast she cheered her weeping train,
Then with her handmaids sought her spouse, yet oft looked back again.
'Midst beggars' blessings, richly bought, forth rode the royal pair:
The glad gods rained down flowers, and sounds of music filled the air.

*Dohá* 110.

Then went Himavant most lovingly to escort them, till with many words of consolation Mahádeva bid him return.

*Chaupái.*

Then he came speedily to the palace, called all the gods. entreated them courteously with words and gifts, and allowed them to depart. They proceeded each to his own realm, and Sambhu arrived at Kailása. How shall I tell its delights when thus occupied by Sambhu and Bhaváni, the father and mother of the world, and their attendants? They began to indulge in sport and dalliance, and every day was some new pleasure. Thus a length of time was passed and the six-headed child (Kártikeya) was born, who vanquished in battle the demon Táraka. His fame is sung by all the sacred books, and his deeds are known throughout the world.

*Chhand* 17.

All the world knows the story of the birth and the glory of Mahádeva's six-headed son ;
And this is the cause why so briefly I pause on the generous deeds he hath done.
Man or maid, who shall tell or sing true and well how Siva took Umá to wife,
Shall be happily wed, and, with blessings bestead, live at ease all the days of his life.

*Dohá* 111.

The amorous doings of Girijá and her beloved are an ocean-like depth that not even the Veda can sound; how then can an ignorant clown such as Tulsi Dás succeed in describing them?

*Chaupái.*

When the sainted Bharadwáj had heard all this pleasant and delectable history he was delighted and longed to hear yet more. With overflowing eyes and every limb thrilling, he was so mastered by love that his tongue could not utter a word. On seeing his condition the great sage was pleased: Blessed is thy birth, to whom Gauri's lord is dear as life. He who loves not Siva's lotus feet can never dream of pleasing Ráma; a guileless love for Siva's feet is the surest sign of faith in Ráma. For who is so

faithful to Ráma as Siva, who for no fault thus left his wife Sati and made a vow, the pledge of unswerving fidelity? And whom does Ráma hold more dear than Siva?

*Dohá* 112.

I have begun by telling you of Siva's deeds, knowing well your secret, that you are a true servant of Ráma, without any variableness.

*Chaupái.*

I understand your character and disposition; listen therefore while I proceed to recount Ráma's adventures. I cannot say how glad I am at this meeting with you to-day. Though Ráma's deeds are beyond measure, and not a myriad serpent kings could tell them all, yet I repeat the tale as it has been revealed, after fixing my thoughts on the god with bow in hand, who is the lord of the queen of speech. For Sarasvati is as it were but a puppet, and Ráma the manager who plays the hidden strings. When he finds a true believer, he graciously sets her to dance in the courtyard of the poet's fancy. To him, the merciful Raghunáth, I bow before commencing the recital of his glory. Of all mountains the most beautiful was Kailás, since Siva and Umá had made it their home:

*Dohá* 113.

Saints, hermits, ascetics, gods, kinnars, sages, and all pious souls came there to dwell and adore Mahádev, the root of all good.

*Chaupái.*

But the enemies of Hari and Hara, who had no love for virtue, could never even in a dream find their way to the place. On this mountain was an enormous *bar* tree, which no time nor season could rob of its beauty; ever stirred by soft, cool, fragrant breezes and a shade from the hottest sun; the *Vitap* tree famous in sacred song as Mahádev's favourite haunt. Once on a time the lord had gone under it, and in an access of delight spread with his own hands his tiger-skin on the ground and there sat at ease: his body as fair in hue as the jasmine or the moon, his arms of great length, a hermit's cloth wrapt about his loins, his feet like lotus blossoms, and his toe-nails like gleams of light to dispel the darkness of

faithful souls ; his face more splendid than the moon in autumn ; and his decorations serpents and streaks of ashes.

*Dohá* 114.

With his twisted coils of hair for a crown ; with the Ganges springing from his head ; with full-orbed eyes like the lotus, and with the crescent moon on his brow ; the dark-throated god shone forth in all his brilliancy.

*Chaupái.*

So sat the enemy of Love, as it were Quietism embodied. Then Párvati, who is the great mother Bhawáni, approached seeing her time. In recognition of her love he received her most courteously and enthroned her on his left side. Joyously she sat beside him and recalled her former life ; and reckoning on his augmented attachment she spoke, being fain to hear the salutary tale : O lord of the world, my lord Purári, your greatness is known throughout all three worlds ; things moving or motionless, serpents, men, and gods, all do homage to your lotus feet.

*Dohá* 115.

You are the lord of all power and of all knowledge ; the centre of art and science ; the great storehouse of meditation, of wisdom, and of asceticism ; and your name is as the tree of life to the afflicted.

*Chaupái.*

If, O blissful being, I have found favour in your sight, and you know me to be your own devoted slave, then, my lord, disperse my ignorance by reciting to me the story of Ráma. How can he who dwells beneath the tree of paradise know aught of sorrow that is born of want? Consider, O moon-crowned god, and relieve my mind of this perplexity. The saints, who preach salvation, declare that Ráma is the uncreated god ; Seshnág, Sarasvati, the Veda, the Puránas, all sing his praises ; you too, night and day, great conqueror of Love, reverently repeat his name. Is this Ráma the son of the King of Avadh, or some other uncreated, passionless, invisible Being?

*Dohá* 116.

If a king's son, and so distrest by the loss of his wife, then how Brahm? When I compare his acts that I see with the eulogies that I hear, my mind is completely distracted.

*Chaupái.*

Instruct me, my lord, with regard to him who is the passionless, all-pervading, omnipresent god. Be not wroth at my ignorance, but take steps to remove it. In the wood, though I was too awe-stricken to tell you, I beheld the majesty of Ráma, yet my mind was so dull that I did not understand, and I reaped a just reward. Again to-day I am in doubt, and with clasped hands I beg of you to compassionate me: be not angry nor say you have been taught already; the past is past; my infatuation is gone, and I have a hearty longing to hear the sacred story of Ráma's virtuous deeds. Declare it, O glory of the serpent king, great lord of heaven.

*Dohá* 117.

Laying my head in the dust, I worship your feet, and with folded hands entreat you to tell me all Raghubar's excellent glory, as extracted from scripture and philosophy.

*Chaupái.*

Though a woman is not entitled to initiation, yet I am in a special degree your servant; further, the saints do not forbid mystic instruction to a woman in great distress, and it is in extreme distress that I call upon you, O heavenly king, for an account of Ráma. First weigh well and declare to me the cause why the invisible Brahm assumed a visible body. Them, my lord, tell me of his incarnation and his pretty actions when a child, and how he wedded Jánaki, and for what fault he left his father's kingdom, and what he did when living in the woods, and how he slew Rávan, and how he amused himself when he recovered the throne: tell me all about him, most amiable Sankara.

*Dohá* 118.

Then tell me, gracious lord, of his marvellous acts, and how with all his subjects the jewel of Raghu's line proceeded to his own abode.

*Chaupái.*

Next tell me, my lord, what it all means ; explaining to me in full detail what is the intelligence that so absorbs the wisest saints ; what is faith, and wisdom, and supreme knowledge and detachment from the world. Tell me also, O lord, of purest understanding, the many other mysteries connected with Ráma ; and if there be anything which I have omitted to ask, be kind enough not to suppress it. You, as the Vedas say, are the great teacher of the three worlds ; what can other poor creatures know? When Siva heard Umá's winning and guileless speech he was glad ; the whole of Ráma's acts thronged in upon his soul, his eyes were bedewed with tears, and his very limbs thrilled with rapture ; for the vision of Ráma filled his heart, and his ecstatic joy was beyond measure.

*Dohá* 119.

For a brief space Mahádev was lost in contemplation ; then recovered himself and began with great joy to tell the tale of Ráma.

*Chaupái.*

" Not to distinguish between the false and the true is like mistaking a snake for a rope ; while as a dream vanishes away on awakening, so is it with those who look well and make sure. I reverence the child Ráma, most easy of access to all who repeat his name. Come to me, O home of bliss and bane of woe, as when thou usedst to sport in Dasarath's courtyard." After thus paying homage to Ráma, Tripurári began his mellifluous recital. " All blessings on thee, O daughter of the mountain king, there is no such benefactor as thou art. Thou hast asked for Ráma's history, as potent as the Ganges to sanctify the world ; and it is on the world's account that thou hast asked, being thyself full of love for Ráma's feet.

*Dohá* 120.

By the blessing of Ráma, O Párvati, not even in sleep can doubt, error, delusion, or distress enter into your mind ; this I know well :

*Chaupái.*

But you have so ordered your certainty as to benefit all who speak or hear. For the ears that hear not Ráma's name are mere

snake-holes ; the eyes that have not seen his true vision are like the false eyes in a peacock's tail ; the heads that have not bowed at the feet of Hari's priest are of no more worth than bitter pumpkins. They whose heart is not inspired with faith in Hari are mere animated corpses ; those who sing not his praises are like croaking frogs ; and hard and impenetrable as a thunderbolt is their breast who hear his deeds and take no delight in them. Listen, O Girijá, to the deeds of Ráma, which are to gods a delight and to demons a delusion.

*Dohá* 121.

Who is the good man that will not listen to the story of Ráma, which is like the heavenly cow, that fulfils every desire of the gods who tend it.

*Chaupái.*

The story of Ráma is like a fair pair of cymbals to frighten away the birds of doubt, or like an axe at the root of the tree of sin ; listen reverently, O daughter of the mountain king. How sweet is the name of Ráma, and his ways and his deeds : his lives and his actions are declared by the scriptures to be beyond number. And as there is no end to Ráma, so the legends about him and his glory are endless : yet seeing the greatness of your love I will attempt to tell them to the best of my ability and as the scriptures have revealed. Your enquiries, Umá, are most becoming and profitable, such as the saints approve, and I too am pleased to hear ; but there was one thing I did not like, though you spoke under the influence of a delusion ; for you said, Is there some other Ráma whom the Vedas sing and whom sages love to contemplate ?

*Dohá* 122.

This is what is said by the vile wretches whom the demon of delusion has in his clutch ; heretics, who are the enemies of Hari and know no difference between truth and falsehood :

*Chaupái.*

Ignorant, unlearned, and blind reprobates ; the mirror of whose mind is clouded by a film of sensuality ; lustful, treacherous, and desperately perverse, who have never even in a dream attained to a

vision of the true faith. They utter doctrines repugnant to the Veda, with no understanding of loss or gain ; their glass is dim, their eyes are nought ; how then can such hapless wights see the beauty of Ráma? Unable to distinguish between the material and immaterial, they jabber many lying words, and under Hari's delusive influence go utterly astray in the world ; for whom no words are too strong. Windy, devilish, drunken, they can utter nothing to the purpose, and are so intoxicated with a strong delusion that no one should give ear to their ravings.

*Sorathá* 10.

Being thus assured in your heart, discard all doubt and fall in adoration at Ráma's feet. Listen, O daughter of the mountain king, and the sun of my words shall disperse all the mists from your soul.

*Chaupái.*

There is no difference between the material and the immaterial ; so declare saints and sages, the Veda and the Puránas. The formless, invisible, and uncreated Immaterial, out of love for the faithful, becomes materialized. How can this be? In the same way as water is crystallized into ice. But how can He be subject to sensual delusion, whose very name is like the sun to disperse the darkness of error ? In Ráma, the Supreme Being, the sun of the world, the night of delusion can have no part whatever ; and in the Lord, who is himself true light, there can be no dawn of understanding ; neither joy nor sorrow, knowledge nor ignorance ; neither personal piety nor the sins of vanity and pride ; but Ráma is the omnipresent God, the blissful Lord of all, the ancient of days ;

*Dohá* 123.

The Great Spirit, the glorious fount of light, the Revealed, the Incomprehensible, the jewel of the family of Raghu, my own lord :" and so saying Siva bowed the head.

*Chaupái.*

" Fools do not perceive their own error, but senselessly attribute delusion to the god ; like simple folk, who seeing a cloudy sky say that the sun itself is darkened, or who gaze at the moon through their fingers and fancy they see it doubled. O Umá, delusion affects Ráma in the same way as smoke, or a cloud, or dust affects the

brightness of the heavens. The five objects of sense, the organs of sense, the gods of sense, as well as the Soul, are all in their degree possessed of intelligence ;[1] but the great enlightener of them all is the eternal Ráma, the lord of Avadh. Whatever in the world is susceptible of enlightenment Ráma enlightens ; every delusion is subject to him ; in him centre all knowledge and virtue ; and by his truth the dulness of material creation shines bright as the Ideal, the senses contributing to the deception.

*Dohá* 124.

Though false as the gleam of a polished shell, or as a mirage caused by the sun's rays, yet no one at any time, past, present, or future, can rid himself of the delusion.

*Chaupái.*

And such is the world in its connection with Hari ; yet though unreal it can cause pain ; in the same way as a man who dreams that his head is cut off is in pain till he awakes. None can declare his beginning or his end, though holy scripture has hymned him as best it could. He moves without feet,[2] he hears without ears, and works manifold ways, yet without hands. Without a mouth he enjoys all tastes, and without a voice is the aptest of speakers ; he can see without eyes, touch without limbs, and without a nose catch every scent. His actions are thus in every way supernatural, and his greatness is utterly beyond description.

*Dohá* 125.

He whom Scripture and Philosophy have thus sung, and whom the saints love to contemplate ; even the Lord God ; he is the son of Dasarath, the beneficent King of Kosala.

*Chaupái.*

By the power of his name I exalt to the regions of the blest any creature whom I see dying at Kási ; he is the sovereign of all creation, animate and inanimate, my lord Raghubar, who reads all hearts.

[1] Even inanimate nature has an unconscious intelligence; reason, order, and activity pervade the material universe, the mineral as well as the animal and vegetable kingdoms.—*Mivart.*

[2] None hath beheld him, none
Seen above other gods and shapes of things,
Swift without feet and flying without wings.
—*Swinburne.*

By repeating his name the most abandoned of sinners destroys the accumulated crimes of many previous existences ; and by those who devoutly meditate upon him the ocean of life is as easily crossed as a puddle in the road. Ráma, O Bhawáni, is the Supreme Spirit, and the error to which you gave utterance on this point was most improper. Such doubt, when entertained in the heart, destroys knowledge, sobriety, and every virtue." On hearing Siva's luminous exposition, the whole structure of heresy fell to pieces ; her love and devotion to Raghupati grew strong and her sore incredulity passed away.

*Dohá* 126.

Again and again clasping her lord's lotus feet and suppliantly folding her hands, her whole soul overflowing with affection, Girijá thus spoke and said :

*Chaupái.*

"My grievous delusion like the feverish heat of autumn has yielded to the moon-like spell of your voice. In your compassion you have removed all my doubt, and I now understand the very Ráma. By my lord's mercy my distress is all gone, and I am made glad by his favour. Now regarding me as your own immediate servant, though I am but a poor ignorant woman, if I have really found grace in your sight, reply to those my former questions. If Ráma is the invisible and immortal God, without parts and passions, and whose temple is the heart, why did he take the form of a man? Declare and explain this to me." On hearing Umá's modest speech and perceiving her sincere desire to be instructed in Ráma's history,

*Dohá* 127.

The all-wise Sankara, the destroyer of Kámdev, was glad of heart, and with many words of praise was thus pleased to speak :

*Sorathá* 11—13.

"Listen, Bhawáni, while I recite in auspicious strains the Rámcharit-mánas, or pure lake of Ráma's deeds, as of old Bhusundi[1]

[1]Káka-bhusundi, originally a Súdra of Ayodhyá, was, by virtue of his birth in that holy place and the intercession of a saint of Ujjain, born again as a Bráhman. His exclusive devotion to Ráma would not suffer him to listen to the Rishi Lomas when he made Brahm the theme of his discourse, and the sage was so annoyed that he changed him for a time into a crow (*káka*).

declared it in the hearing of Garur, the king of the birds. First I will relate the manner of their exalted converse, after which you shall hear of Ráma's incarnation and his all-glorious and sinless deeds. Hari's virtues and names are infinite, and his history and his manifestations beyond number or measure ; I tell them as best I can ; listen, Umá, with respect.

*Chaupái.*

Listen, Girijá, to the grateful tale of Hari's great and holy acts, as they have been recorded in the scriptures. The cause of Hari's incarnation is not to be dogmatically defined ; for to my mind, Bhawáni, Ráma is beyond the grasp of intellect, or soul, or speech ; yet as saints and sages, the Veda and the Puránas, have partly and to the extent of their capacity explained the matter, so I, fair dame, will now declare to you the cause as I understand it. Whenever virtue decays and evil spirits, waxing strong in pride, work iniquity that cannot be told, to the confusion of Bráhmans, cows, gods, and earth itself, the compassionate Lord assumes some new bodily form ; relieves the distress of the faithful ;

*Dohá* 128.

Destroys the evil spirits ; reinstates the gods ; maintains the way of salvation ; and diffuses the brightness of his glory throughout the world. Such are the motives of Ráma's incarnations.

*Chaupái.*

Singing his glory, the saints escape the waves of life, and it is for their sake only that the Compassionate assumes a body. The causes of Ráma's incarnations have been many and various, differing one from another. I will relate one or two of his previous births, if, Bhawáni, you are prepared to give me your devout attention. Hari had once two loving door-keepers, the famous Jay and Bijay : both brothers in consequence of a Bráhman's curse were born again in the form of the malignant demons Hiranya Kasipu and Hiranyáksha, who became celebrated throughout the world as the tamers of the pride of the king of heaven. Incarnate as a Boar, he triumphed in battle over the first illustrious hero and destroyed him, and again in the Narsint avatár slew the second : the fame of the faithful Prahlád is widespread.

*Dohá* 129.

Then the evil spirits went and took birth as the bold and powerful warriors Kumbha-karan and Rávan, who, as all the world knows, subdued even the gods.

*Chaupái.*

Though killed by a god they did not attain to salvation, for the Bráhman had doomed them to three births. They then were once the cause why the cherisher of the faithful assumed a body, and at that time his parents Kasyapa and Aditi were incarnate as Dasarath and Kausalya of glorious memory. Thus it was that in that age of the world he descended from heaven and wrought saving deeds on earth. In another age, seeing the gods distrest and waging ineffectual battle with Jalandhar, Sambhu warred against him times without number, but could not subdue the valiant giant, for the exceeding virtue of his wife protected him against Purári's every attack.

*Dohá* 130.

By a stratagem the Lord broke her vow and effected the will of the gods. When she discovered the deception, then in her wrath she cursed him.

*Chaupái.*

And Hari did according to her curse ; for though the Lord God, he is full of playfulness and of mercy. So Jalandhar was born as Rávan, and being killed in battle by Ráma attained to high glory. This then was the cause of one birth and the reason why Ráma then assumed a human form. Each avatár has its legend, which the poets have sung in various ways and according to tradition. On one occasion it was Nárad's curse that caused him to become incarnate." At this saying Girijá was astounded : " Nárad is a wise saint and a votary of Vishnu's ; what was his reason for uttering a curse ? what offence had Ramá's lord committed? Tell me the whole story, Purári ; it is passing strange that a saint should be subject to passion."

*Dohá* 131.

Then answered Mahádev with a smile : " There is neither wise nor fool ; man is ever such as Raghupati will have him to be.

*Soratha* 14.

I sing the glory of Ráma ; listen devoutly, O Bharadwáj ; and do thou, O Tulsi, put away the intoxication of pride and worship Raghunáth, the destroyer of death.

*Chaupái.*

In the Himálaya mountains is a very sacred cave close to the holy Ganges. Seeing this pure and delightful hermitage the divine sage Nárad was greatly pleased ; and as he gazed upon the beauty of the rocks and the forest glades he was filled with love to god, and as he thought upon Hari the curse was broken and his spotless soul fell all at once into a trance. When the king of heaven saw the sage's state he feared, and in terms of high respect addressed himself to Kámdev : Go, I beg, with your assistant. He then, the god of love, went very gladly ; but in Indra's mind was great alarm, for he thought 'The saint would rob me of my kingdom.' All the world over, a gallant or a miser is as much afraid of interference as is a thievish crow.

*Dohá* 132.

Like a wretched dog that on seeing a lion runs away with the dry bone it has in its mouth for fear it should be taken from him, so was Indra in his shamelessness.

*Chaupái.*

When Love reached the hermitage his deceptive power created a false spring. All the trees broke out into many-coloured blossoms ; there was a murmuring of cuckoos and a humming of bees. A delightful air, soft, cool, and fragrant, sprung up fanning the flame of desire ; while Rambhá and the other heavenly nymphs, all well-skilled in the art of love, began singing songs in every variety of measure and disporting themselves in the dance with waving hands. When Love saw himself so well supported he was glad, and again manifested his creative power in diverse ways ; but his devices had no effect upon the saint, and guilty Love began to tremble for himself. Who dare trespass on his bounds who has the great Ramá-pati for a guardian?

*Dohá* 133.

In dire dismay both Kámdev and his accomplice confessed themselves defeated and went and clasped the holy man's feet, addressing him in accents of the deepest humility.

*Chaupái.*

There was no anger in Nárad's soul, who in friendly terms replied to Kámdev and reassured him. Then bowing the head at his feet, and accepting his commands, they both retired, the god and his companion; and repairing to Indra's court there related all their own doings and the saint's clemency. As they listened to the tale all were astonished, and bowing the head to Hari extolled the saint. Then went Nárad to Siva, greatly proud of his victory over Love, and told him all Love's doings. In acknowledgment of his affection Mahádev gave him good advice: O great saint, again and again I beg of you never to repeat to Hari this story that you have now told me: should it happen to be brought forward keep it dark as possible.

*Dohá* 134.

Good as the advice was, it did not please Nárad. O Bharadwája listen to the strange recital, and see the strength of Hari's will.

*Chaupái.*

What Ráma wills to have done is done, and there is no one who can alter it. As Sambhu's words did not please the saint he went straight to Brahma's court, and to the accompaniment of the famous flute that he had in his hand sung right through the excellent song of Hari's praises. Then he passed on to the milky ocean, where abides Vishnu, the glory of revelation. The Lord ran to meet him in great joy, and side by side they sat together. Said the sovereign of the universe with a smile: Reverend sir, 'tis long since you last did me this honour. Then Nárad declared all Love's doings, though Siva had beforehand cautioned him: the deceptive power of Raghupati is so strong that there is no man living who can resist it.

*Dohá* 135.

Then spoke the great god, with an austere look but in flattering terms: Vanity and the intoxicating pride that Love has caused shall perish at this remembrance.[1]

[1]Siva's speech is so ambiguously worded that it really conveys a censure, while Nárad interprets it as a compliment. The hidden meaning is: Hereafter when you reflect upon this incident and all its consequences you will take a lesson by it and be more humble, remembering your weakness; but the more obvious meaning of the words and that in which Nárad took them is: By meditating on your triumph over Love other men will triumph too.

*Chaupái.*

Know, O saint, that infatuation prevails in a soul that is devoid of wisdom and self-control; but what pain can Love cause to one so steadfast in asceticism as yourself? Said Nárad in his pride: It is all your favour, my Lord. The Compassionate saw into his heart and thought within himself: Pride like a huge tree has sprouted in his soul: I must at once tear it up by the roots; ever to relieve my servants is the vow that I have made. I will surely contrive some sportive device on behalf of the saint. Then Nárad bowed his head at Hari's feet and took his leave, swelling with pride; while Vishnu gave orders to the spirit of delusion. Listen now to his strange doings.

*Dohá* 136.

He constructed on the road a city a hundred leagues in circumference, with everything more perfect than even in Vishnu's own capital,

*Chaupái.*

and inhabited by such graceful men and women that you would take them all to be incarnations of Kámdev and Rati. The king of the city, by name Sila-nidhi, had horses, elephants, and troops beyond number; his royal pomp like that of a hundred Indras; himself a centre of power, policy, and magnificence. His daughter Viswa-mohani was so beautiful that even Lachhmi would be put to the blush, and by Hari's delusive power was in every way so exquisite that no words could describe her. As the princess was selecting a husband, kings beyond number came as suitors. The saint too came to the fairy city and began making enquiries of the people; and when he had heard all that was going on he proceeded to the palace, where the king most respectfully gave him a seat,

*Dohá* 137.

and then brought his daughter for him to see, saying: Tell me, good sir, after consideration, all that is good or bad about her.

*Chaupái.*

When Nárad saw her beauty he forgot his vow of chastity and continued long gazing upon her. Her features quite fascinated

him ; yet he would not in words express his heart's delight. "Her bridegroom shall be one of the immortals, invincible in battle, reverenced by all creation ; such a one shall Sila-nidhi's daughter wed." But though he thought thus, he kept it to himself, and said something or other to the king, and then, after he had finished speaking, went away full of thought, considering : What scheme can I devise now so as to make her marry me. No time is this for prayers or penance ; good God, how am I to get the girl?

*Dohá* 138.

I must make myself exceedingly charming and beautiful, so that the princess may be pleased when she sees me and give me the wreath of victory.

*Chaupái.*

I will ask Hari for the gift of beauty ; in going to him there will be much delay ; but I have no other such friend, and this is an opportunity for him to help me. So he offered up a fervent prayer and the merciful Lord appeared to him in a vision. The saint's eyes brightened at the sight and he rejoiced in heart, saying : My object will be accomplished. He then with the utmost humility told his tale, and added : O my Lord, be gracious and assist me. Bestow on me beauty equal to your own ; for in no other way can I get possession of her. Make haste to accomplish my success ; for lo ! I am your slave. When the Compassionate saw the mighty influence of the deception he had wrought he smiled to himself :

*Dohá* 139.

Hear, O Nárad ; I will assuredly bring about your highest good, that and nought else ; nor shall my words prove vain.

*Chaupái.*

If a sick man in the weariness of disease ask for what will harm him, the physician will not grant it. In the same way, O suffering saint, will I act as is best for you. So saying the Lord vanished. The saint was so demented by the power of the delusion that he did not understand Hari's hidden meaning, but hastened at once to the spot where the marriage arena had been prepared. The Rájas were seated rank upon rank, each with his retinue in grand attire.

The saint thought joyfully within himself: My beauty is such that she will never leave me to wed another. But the merciful God, the saint's true friend, had made him hideous beyond all description. Every one recognized him as Nárad and bowed the head, knowing nothing of what had taken place.

*Dohá* 140.

Now there were there two of Siva's attendants who knew the whole secret. Dressed like Bráhmans, they seemed to be spectators of the show, walking here and there and looking about.

*Chaupái.*

Both went and sat down in the same group with the saint, so proud of his beauty; and in their Bráhmanical attire they attracted no notice. They say in jest so that Nárad might hear: Hari has given this man such excellent beauty that the princess will be charmed with his appearance and will certainly wed him, taking him for Hari himself. The saint was so utterly subjugated by passion that Sambhu's servants could laugh and jeer as they liked, and though he heard their mockery, his intellect was too bewildered to understand it. No one present saw what was going on save only the princess, who on beholding him just as he was with his monkey face and deformed body was quite disgusted at the sight,

*Dohá* 141.

and with her handmaids glided like a swan through the long line of kings with the wreath of victory in her lotus hands.

*Chaupái.*

She would not let her eyes rest for a moment on the spot where Nárad was sitting in his pride. The saint in his anxiety kept fidgeting about, and Siva's attendants smiled to see the state he was in. Then entered the Compassionate in form as a king, and gladly the princess cast on him the garland. Thus Lachhmi's lord carried off the bride to the despair of the assembled kings. The saint was much disturbed: in his infatuation his reason was quite gone, like a diamond dropt out of a hole in a bag. Then Siva's attendants said with a smile, Get a glass and look at yourself; and having so said both ran away in great alarm. The saint looked at his reflection in the

water, and when he saw himself he was furious and cursed them with a grievous curse.

*Dohá* 142.

Go false and guilty pair and take birth as demons of the night. Be this your reward for mocking me ; mock again a saint, if you dare.

*Chaupái.*

Looking again in the water he saw himself in his proper form ; yet still he was not content at heart, but his lip quivered with rage, and in haste he betook himself to Vishnu. Shall I curse him to death or die myself, seeing that he has made a mock of me throughout the world ? On the way Hell's victor met him, and with him Ramá in form as the princess. With a smile and in gentle tones he said : Where goes the saint, like one distracted ? On hearing these words, his anger rose and infatuation utterly mastered his reason : You never could bear to look upon another's prosperity ; your envy and deceit are notorious ; at the churning of the ocean you drove Siva mad, and made the gods quaff the poisoned cup.

*Dohá* 143.

Intoxicating liquor was the demon's share, and the poison was for Mahádev ; but for yourself Ramá and the *Kaustubha* jewel. You have ever been selfish and perverse and treacherous in your dealings.

*Chaupái.*

Utterly self-willed, with no one over you, and bent on doing whatever comes into your mind ; confounding the good and exalting the bad ; with a heart incapable either of surprise or pleasure ; trying every one with your tricks without the slightest consideration and in mere lightness of heart. Neither good deeds nor bad in any way affect you, nor has any one up to the present ever succeeded in restraining you. Now for this fine treat that you have given me you shall receive a due return. Be born in the form in which you have now imposed upon me ; this is my curse. And as you have made me like a monkey, you shall have monkeys for helpmates ; and in the same way as you have sorely wronged me, so shall you be distrest by the loss of your wife.

*Dohá* 144.

The lord gladly accepted the curse, thus working the will of the gods, and in his compassion withdrew the influence of his deceptive power.

*Chaupái.*

When this was removed, there appeared neither Ramá nor the princess ; and the saint fell in great fear at the feet of Hari, ever ready to heal the sorrows of a suppliant, crying : "May my curse be made of no effect." Said the gracious god : It is my will. Said the saint : I have spoken many injurious words ; how shall my guilt be expiated? "Go and repeat Sankara's hundred names, and your soul will at once be relieved. There is no one so dear to me as Siva ; never let your faith in this truth be shaken. He on whom Siva will not show mercy shall never know true love to me. Think on this as you wander over the earth ; the delusion haunts you no longer."

*Dohá* 145.

Having thus reassured the saint, the lord disappeared, and Nárad took his way to Paradise chanting Ráma's praises as he went.

*Chaupái.*

Siva's two followers saw him on the road rejoicing and in his right mind. In great alarm they drew near, and clasping his feet made their supplication : O great saint, we are not Bráhmans, but servants of Mahádev and have reaped the fruit of our great sin : in your mercy remove the curse. Said the compassionate Nárad : You must both be born as demons of great power, majesty, and strength ; but when you have subdued the universe by the might of your arm, Vishnu shall take upon him human form, and dying in battle at his hands you shall attain to salvation, nor ever be born again. After bowing their head at his feet, both went their way and in due course were born as demons.

*Dohá* 146.

In one age this was the reason why the lord became incarnate to gladden the gods, to comfort the saints, and to ease earth of its burdens.

*Chaupái.*

Thus Hari's births and actions are many and various, but all of them glorious and beneficent. In every age he has manifested himself and wrought many excellent works; and on each occasion great saints have sung his acts in holy strains of choicest verse, relating marvellous histories of diverse kinds, which the wise hear without any amazement. For as Hari is without end, so are there endless verses about him, which are heard and repeated by scripture and the faithful. The delightful adventures of Rámchandra could not all be sung in a myriad ages. This story that I have now told, Bhawáni, shows how Hari's deceptive power can infatuate even saints and sages. He, the lord, is sportive, gracious to suppliants, accessible to his servants, and a remover of all sorrow.

*Soratha* 15.

There is neither god, man, nor saint whom unreality has not infatuated. Reflect upon this and worship the great master of the unreal.

*Chaupái.*

Hear, O daughter of the Himálaya, a second reason, which I will proceed to relate at full length, why the uncreated, the passionless, the incomparable Brahm became King of Kosala. The lord, whom you saw roaming in the forest with his brother in hermit's attire; at whose doings, Bhawáni, you in Sati's form lost your senses, and still to this day have a touch of disease; the recital of his adventures will heal all your sickness. All his sportive acts in that incarnation I am now about to tell as best I can." O Bharadwáj, on hearing Sankara thus speak, the modest and affectionate Umá smiled for joy, while her lord continued: "The cause of the incarnation

*Dohá* 147.

I am now about to explain; (listen, great saint, with attention to the delightful story of Ráma, which can cleanse all the stains of the world and bring man to heaven)

*Chaupái.*

Manu, the son of the self-existing, had to wife Satarúpa, and of them were born the whole human race; even to this day the

fame of their virtue and conjugal fidelity is celebrated in the scriptures. Their son was King Uttánapáda, who begot Hari's faithful client Dhruva. The younger son, by name Priya-vrata, is mentioned with praise both by the Vedas and Puránas. Their daughter Devahuti became the devoted wife of Saint Kardama, and in her womb the eternal Lord God, in his mercy and compassion, planted Kapila, the author of the Sánkhya philosophy, the divine exponent of the theory of entities. This Manu reigned a long while, keeping all god's commandments.

*Sorathá* 16.

But in a palace complete detachment from the senses is impracticable. Old age came upon him and he thought with grief: My life has been spent without any true devotion to Hari.

*Chaupái.*

Then perforce he resigned the throne to his son, and with his queen repaired to the forest, to Naimisha, famous among all holy places as specially sacred and liberal of success. Glad of heart, King Manu sought the spot where dwelt the company of saints and sages; and as the resolute pair passed along the way they seemed incarnations of Wisdom and Faith. On reaching the bank of the Gomati, they bathed with delight in the clear stream; and there the inspired saints and sages came to meet them, recognizing in the king a champion of religion. Devoutly they took them to visit each different shrine, and with wasted body clad in hermit's robes they are ever in the assembly of the faithful listening to the Puránas,

*Dohá* 148.

Devoutly repeating the twelve-lettered charm,[1] and with their whole soul directed to the lotus feet of Vásudeva.

*Chaupái.*

Meditating on the Supreme Brahm, they live on leaves and fruits and roots. Then doing penance as before Hari they give up roots and fruits for water only. In their heart an endless craving: "O that we might see with our eyes the very God, without parts or

[1]The twelve-lettered charm is *Om Namo Bhagavate Vásudeváya.*

passions; without beginning or end; whom the preachers of salvation contemplate; whom the Vedas define as the unutterable; the pure spirit, without attributes and beyond all comparison; as parts of whom are produced in various forms the lords Sambhu, Brahma, and Vishnu. Yet so great a god submits to his own servants and for their sake assumes in sport a body. If this be true, as the scriptures have declared, our desire will of a surety be accomplished."

*Dohá* 149.

In this way they spent six thousand years, living only on water; and then seven thousand, living only on air.

*Chaupái.*

For ten thousand years they gave up even this and remained both standing on one leg. Now Brahma, Hari, and Hara saw this interminable penance and repeatedly came near to Manu and tempted him saying: Ask your boon; but for all their persuasion he was too steadfast to move. Though his body was reduced to a skeleton, there was not the least pain in his soul. Then the omniscient lord knew that the king and queen were his servants and had this single object in practising such austerities. A solemn voice full of ambrosial grace sounded in the sky, saying: Ask, ask; a voice so blithe that it would wake the dead. As it dropped upon the ears of their soul, their bodies became again as comely and stout as if they had only that day left their home.

*Dohá* 150.

As the ambrosial voice rung in their ears, their body quivered and thrilled; and falling on the ground in an irrepressible transport of love Manu thus spoke:

*Chaupái.*

"Hearken, O thou that art as the tree of paradise or the sacred cow to thy servants; the dust on whose feet is ever worshipt by Brahma, Hari, and Hara; accessible to the faithful; bounteous of all good; protector of suppliants; lord of all creation: if, O friend of the friendless, I have found favour in thy sight, then in thy mercy grant me this boon. Let me with mine own eyes behold thee in that form in which thou dwellest in Siva's breast, which the saints

desire to see ; the swan in the lake of Bhusundi's soul ; the sum and the negation of all attributes ; the theme of the Veda : do me this grace, O thou that healest the woes of every suppliant." This gentle, submissive, and affectionate speech of the wedded pair went to the heart of the generous and merciful god ; and the sovereign of the universe manifested himself,

*Dohá* 151.

In hue as the lotus or the sapphire ; dark as a rain-cloud ; of such lustrous form that a myriad Loves could not be compared to it,

*Chaupái.*

With a face perfect in beauty like the autumnal moon ; with lovely cheeks and chin and dimpled neck, red lips and gleaming teeth, and a nose and smile more radiant than a moonbeam ; eyes bright as a lotus bud and a glance to fascinate the heart ; brows surpassing Love's bow; on the forehead a sectarial mark and glistening star ; golden fish in his ears and a bright crown on his head ; crisp curling hair like a swarm of bees ; on his breast the Srívatsa jewel and a long wreath of sweet wild flowers, and jewelled adornments about his neck ; a waist like a lion, a comely Brahmanical thread, and exquisite clasps upon his arms, long and round as an elephant's trunk ; with a quiver at his side and bow and arrow in his hand ;

*Dohá* 152.

his yellow apparel more lustrous than the lightning; his body charmingly dimpled, and his navel like a bee hovering over the dark wave of the Jamuná ;

*Chaupái.*

his feet beautiful beyond description, lotus haunt of the bee-like souls of the saints. On his left side shines in equal glory the Primal Energy, queen of beauty, mother of the world ; of whose members are born countless Umás and Ramás and Brahmánis, all alike perfect ; by the play of whose eyebrows a world flashes into existence, even Síta, enthroned at Ráma's side. As Manu and Satarúpa beheld this vision of Hari in all his beauty, gazing fixedly with open eyes, they adored his incomparable magnificence, nor could be satiated with the sight. Overcome with delight and transported

out of themselves, they fell flat on the ground, clasping his feet in their hands. But the gracious lord putting his lotus hand upon their heads quickly raised them up,

*Dohá* 153.

and again said, "Be assured that you have found favour with me: ask whatever boon you will, the largest gift you can think of."

*Chaupái.*

On hearing the lord's words they clasped their hands in prayer, and taking courage thus spoke in timid accents: "O lord, we have seen your lotus feet, and our every object has been accomplished. Yet one longing remains, and I know not whether to describe it as easy or difficult of attainment. It is easy, my master, for you to give; but so far as my meanness is concerned, it is difficult. Like a beggar who has found the wishing-tree, but trembles to ask for too good fortune, not realizing its full power; so my heart is troubled by doubt. O my god, you read all hearts and know what I wish; grant me my desire." "O king, fear not, but ask of me; there is nothing I would not give you."

*Dohá* 154.

"O gracious lord, I will declare honestly the crowning boon; for what concealment can there be? I would have a son like you."

*Chaupái.*

On seeing his love and hearing his sincere words, said the Compassionate, "So be it." "Where can I go to find your equal?" "I myself, O king, will be born as your son." Then seeing Satarúpa with her hands still clasped, "O lady, ask whatever boon you please." "O my lord, the boon my husband has wisely asked is what I too should most desire. But it is great presumption; though in your clemency you have confirmed it. You are the father of all the gods, the lord of the world, the supreme spirit, the omniscient; and therefore my mind doubts; and yet the Lord's word cannot fail. O my god, the bliss that is enjoyed and the future state that is attained by your own servants —

*Dohá* 155.

in your mercy grant to me even that bliss, that state, that devotion, that love to your feet, that knowledge, and that existence."

*Chaupái.*

Hearing this modest and deeply touching petition the Compassionate gently replied : " Fear not ; whatever your mind desires that I have granted. O mother, your supernatural wisdom by my favour shall never fail." Then again spoke Manu, bowing at his feet.: " I too have another petition, my lord. Is there any one who will not call me fool for devoting myself to your feet simply on account of a son ? As a snake's hood without a jewel, or a fish without water, so is my life dependent upon you." Begging this boon he remained clasping his feet till the All-merciful said : Be it so : now as I order go and dwell at Indra's capital.

*Sorathá* 18.

There, father, enjoy yourself freely ; and again, when some time has passed, be born as the King of Avadh and I will be your son.

*Chaupái.*

Voluntarily assuming human guise, I will manifest myself in your house, father, and, together with the secondary emanations of my divinity being clothed with a body, will do great deeds for the consolation of my people. Blessed are they who listen reverently ; quitting the vain conceits of self they shall pass over the ocean of life. Even the Primal Energy, by whom the visible world was created, that self-same shadow of me here present, shall also become incarnate. I will accomplish your desire ; true is my promise, true, aye ! true." Again and again thus saying, the compassionate lord vanished out of sight ; and the wedded pair, full of faith in the All-merciful, stayed for a while at the hermitage, and then, when their time was come, passed painlessly out of the body and took up their abode in Amaravati, the city of the immortals.

*Dohá* 156.

Such was the pious legend which Siva related to Umá. Hearken now, O Bharadwáj, to yet another motive for Ráma's incarnation.

*Chaupái.*

Listen, great saint, to the holy and hoary tale as it was repeated by Sambhu to Girijá. There is a world-famous country called Kaikaya, and Satya-ketu was its king. A champion of religion ; a storehouse of good policy ; great in glory, magnificence, virtue,

and power. He had two gallant sons, staunch in fight, endowed with every good quality. The elder and the heir to the kingdom was named Pratáp-bhánu, and the other Ari-mardan, of unequalled strength of arm and like a rock to stand the brunt of battle. The sympathy between brother and brother was perfect and their mutual affection without either flaw or disguise.[1] To the elder son the king resigned the realm, and withdrew into the woods to devote himself to religion.

*Dohá* 157.

When Pratáp-bhánu became king a cry spread throughout all the land: Under a sovereign so skilled in sacred lore not a speck of sin will be left anywhere.

*Chaupái.*

The Prime Minister, Dharm-ruchi, a second Sukra,[2] was as devoted to the king as he was wise. With a prudent counsellor, valiant kinsmen, himself a glorious leader in war, with a countless host of horse and foot, and chariots and elephants, and fighting men beyond number, all eager for the fray, the king might well rejoice as he inspected his army, 'mid the clash of tumultuous music. Having selected an auspicious day, he marched forth with a special force, bent on universal conquest. In all his numerous battles, wherever they took place, the pride of kings was abased; all the seven continents were reduced by the might of his arm, and their princes escaped only on payment of tribute. At that time Pratáp-bhánu became the sole monarch of the whole round world.

*Dohá* 158

Having thus subdued the universe by the might of his arm, he re-entered his capital and devoted himself in turn to business, duty, love, or religion.

*Chaupái.*

The grateful earth, invigorated by Pratáp-bhánu's sway, became a very Kámadhenu, and all his subjects, men and women, happy and

[1] I read this couplet as follows: *Bhâihi bhâihi param samîti, sakal-dosh-chhal-varjita prîti:* the penultimate syllable of *samîti* being lengthened *metri gratia.* Such a license is of frequent occurrence; but in this particular instance it appears to have troubled the copyists, who have made various substitutions all more or less injurious to the sense.

[2] The regent of the planet Sukra (Venus) is the preceptor of the Daityas, or Titans.

free from all annoy, grew in virtue and beauty. The minister Dharm-ruchi, devoted servant of Hari, lovingly instructed his lord in state policy ; nor did the king ever fail in due reverence either to his spiritual teacher, or the gods, or the saints, or his departed ancestors, or the Bráhmans. All the duties which are enjoined upon kings in the Veda he carefully and gladly performed : every day he made large offerings and heard the scriptures read, both the Veda and the Puránas ; and he constructed many baths and wells and tanks, flower gardens and beautiful orchards, handsome monasteries and temples, and also restored every ancient shrine.

*Dohá* 159.

For every single sacrifice enjoined in the scriptures or the Puránas the king in his zeal performed a thousand.

*Chaupái.*

In his heart there was no aiming after advantage, but such was his supreme knowledge and intelligence that he dedicated to God the whole merit of all his thoughts, words, and actions. One day he mounted his gallant steed and went, with his retinue equipt for the chase, into a dense forest of the Vindhyachal mountains and killed many fine deer. As he ranged the wood he spied a wild boar showing amid the foliage like Ráhu with the moon in his clutch ; its orb too vast to be contained in his mouth, though in his rage he would not entirely disgorge it. The monstrous boar with its beautiful tusks, as I have described them, and its vast limbs of immeasurable bulk, growled when he heard the tramp of the horse : it too at the sight started and pricked up its ears.

*Dohá* 160.

On seeing the vast boar, resembling some purple mountain-peak, the horse started aside, and it was only by much spurring and persuasion that the king could prevent it from breaking away.

*Chaupái.*

When it saw the horse coming on with speed, the beast took to flight swift as the wind, keeping close to the ground as it went, and ever regarding the shaft which the king had at once fitted to his bow. Taking steady aim he let it fly ; but the boar saved himself by his

wiliness, and rushed on, now well in sight, and now altogether hidden, while the king in much excitement followed closely on his tracks. At length it reached a dense thicket impenetrable by horse or elephant. Though alone in the wood, and distressed by his exertions, still the king would not abandon the chase; till the boar seeing him so determined slunk away into a deep cave. When the king perceived that there was no getting near him he was quite sad, and moreover he had lost his way in this hunt through so great a forest.

*Dohá* 161.

Hungry and thirsty and exhausted with fatigue the king and his horse kept searching in much distress for a stream or pond, and were half-dead for want of water.

*Chaupái.*

As he wandered through the forest, he spied a hermitage, where dwelt a king in disguise of a holy man. He had been despoiled of his kingdom by Pratáp-bhánu, and had left his army on the field of battle, knowing that his adversary's star was in the ascendant, and his own in the decline. Too proud to meet the king, too much mortified to go home, nursing the rage in his heart, he like a beggar, though a prince, took up his abode in the wood in the garb of an anchorite. He at once recognized King Pratáp-bhánu as he drew near; but the latter was too tired to recognize him, and looking only at his dress took him to be a holy man, and alighting from his horse saluted him; he was, however, too astute to declare his name.

*Dohá* 162.

Seeing the king to be faint with thirst he pointed out to him a fine pond, where he bathed and drank, both he and his horse, with much gladness.

*Chaupái.*

All his weariness passed away and he was quite happy again. The hermit took him to his cell, and as the sun had now set showed him where he might rest; but yet enquired of him in courteous tones: Who may you be, and why thus young and beautiful do you risk your life by roaming alone in the forest? You have all the marks of a great sovereign, and at the sight of you I am quite moved.

"Know then, reverend sir, that I am the minister of King Pratáp-bhánu; in pursuit of the chase I have lost my way, and by great good fortune have been brought into your presence. To get a sight of you was no easy matter, and I am satisfied that something good is about to befall me." Said the hermit: "My son, it is now dusk, and your city is seventy leagues away.

*Dohá* 163-4.

The night is dark, the forest dense, and the road not easy to find. Tarry then here for to-day and start to-morrow at dawn." Says Tulsi, Fate is furthered in its own way: either you go to meet it or itself comes and carries you off.

*Chaupái.*

"Very well, my lord, I obey your command;" and so saying the king tied up his horse to a tree and came and sat down. With many flattering speeches he bowed at his feet, extolling his own good fortune, and at last in modest and winning terms put the question: "Regarding you, my lord, as a father I make bold and beg of you to look upon me as your son and servant and to declare to me your name." Now the king did not recognize him, but he recognized the king, and was as false and crafty as the king was honest: moreover being an enemy, and at the same time both a warrior by caste and of royal birth, he was bent on accomplishing his own ends, whether by fraud or by right. In his enmity he was grieved to see the king's prosperity, and his heart within him burned as with the fire of a furnace; but on hearing the prince's simple words he controlled his resentment and was glad at heart,

*Dohá* 165.

and uttered yet another smooth but false and artful speech: "My name is now Bhikhári, a homeless beggar."

*Chaupái.*

Said the king: "Philosophers like you, with whom all self-consciousness has been extinguished, ever conceal their own personality, and are in every way blessed, though their outer garb be wretched. Therefore the saints proclaim aloud in men's ears that it is the poor whom Hari holds most dear. A poor and homeless beggar, such as

you are, is an anxiety to Brahma and Siva : at all events, I prostrate myself at your feet and beg of you to grant me your grace." When he saw the king's simple affection he waxed all the more confident, and won him over in every way, using words with a still greater show of friendliness : "Hearken, O king, while I relate the truth of the matter. I have for a long time dwelt here,

*Dohá* 166.

and till now neither has any one come to me, nor have I spoken to any one ; for worldly honour is like a fire, and penance a forest for it to consume."

*Soraṭhá* 19.

Says Tulsi : Fools are deceived by fair appearances, but not wise men : though a peacock is fair to look upon and its voice is pleasant,[1] yet it devours the snake.

*Chaupái.*

"Therefore I live retired in the world, and save Hari have no care whatever. The lord knows everything without being told ; so what is to be gained by conciliating the world. But you are so good and sensible that I cannot but love you in return for the faith and confidence you have placed in me ; and if I were to send you away, my son, it would be a very grievous sin on my part." The more the hermit talked of his detachment from the world, the more trustful grew the king ; till at last the false anchorite, seeing him completely in his power, said : My name, brother, is Ektanu. The king bowed and asked further : "Tell me, I pray, the meaning of this name, for surely I am your servant."

*Dohá* 167.

"At the first dawn of creation my birth took place, and my name was Ektanu, for this reason, that I have never taken any other body.

*Chaupái.*

Marvel not in your mind, my son ; for nothing is too difficult for penance. By the power of penance the Creator created the world ; by the power of penance Vishnu is the great redeemer ; by the power

[1]The peacock's voice can scarcely be called pleasant in itself, but it may be so by association, as a sign of the rains.

of penance Siva works destruction ; and to penance there is nothing in the world impossible." The king, as he listened, was charmed, for he commenced relating old-world stories ; many legends of pious deeds and holy lives ; examples of asceticism and divine wisdom ; tales of the birth, preservation, and destruction of the world, and innumerable other marvellous narratives. The king, as he listened, yielded completely to his influence and proceeded to tell him his true name. Said the hermit : " O king, I know you ; though you tried to practise a trick upon me, I took it quite in good part.

*Soraṭhá* 20.

Hear, O king ; it is a political maxim that on some occasions a king should not declare his name ; and when I observed your excellent sagacity I conceived a great affection for you.

*Chaupái.*

Your name is Pratáp-bhánu, and your father is king Satya-ketu. O sir, a spiritual man knows everything, and there is no need of another's telling. Ah, my son, when I beheld your natural goodness, your faith and trustfulness, and your knowledge of state-craft, there sprung up an affection for you in my soul, and I told you my own story as you asked me. Now I am well pleased with you ; doubt not, but ask whatever you will." On hearing these fair words the king was delighted, and clasping his feet entreated him supplicantly : " O merciful saint, by the sight of you the four objects of human desire have all come within my grasp. Yet, as I see my lord so gracious, I will ask an impossible boon and be happy for ever.

*Dohá* 168.

May I die of old age, free from bodily pain ; may I never be conquered in battle; may earth rid of every foe be all under my sole sway, and may my empire last for a hundred ages."

*Chaupái.*

Said the anchorite : " O king, so be it : there is, however, one difficulty : hear it. The age shall bow down before you, with the sole exception of the Bráhmans. By the virtue of penance a Bráhman is ever powerful, and there is none who can deliver from his wrath. If you can reduce them to your will, Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahádev

will also be at your command. But against a Bráhman might is of no avail: with both arms raised to heaven I tell you this solemn truth. Hearken, O king; if you escape a Bráhman's curse, your destruction shall never be." On hearing his promise the king was glad: "Then, my lord, my destruction will never be; by your favour, most gracious sir, I shall be prosperous for all time."

*Dohá* 169.

Amen, said the false hermit, and added with crafty intent: "If you let any one know of your losing your way and your meeting with me, that will not be my fault.

*Chaupái.*

For I warn you, sir, that it is most inexpedient to repeat the matter: if it come to a third pair of ears, I tell you true, it will be your ruin. If you divulge this secret, or if a Bráhman curse you, you are undone, O Pratáp-bhánu. If Hari and Hara then are wroth, no other way of escape is left the wretch." True, my lord, said the king, clasping his feet; who can deliver from the wrath of a Bráhman or a spiritual director? The Guru can save from Brahma's anger, but if the Guru himself be wroth there is none in the world that can save. If I do not follow your advice, I have not the slightest doubt that I shall perish; but my soul is disturbed by one fear; the curse of a Bráhman is something most terrible.

*Dohá* 170.

Of your great goodness, tell me in what way I can win over the Bráhmans; for except you, my gracious lord, I have no other friend."

*Chaupái.*

"Hearken, O king; there are diverse expedients among men, but hard to put in practice and of doubtful issue. There is, however, one very simple plan, though even this involves a difficulty. Its contrivance depends upon me, and for me to go to your capital is out of the question; for to this day from the time I was born I have never entered house or village. If I do not go, it will be a misfortune for you; and thus I am in a dilemma." The king replied in gentle tones: "It is, my lord, a maxim of scripture that the great show kindness to the small; thus mountains ever bear tiny grasses on their head; the

fathomless ocean bears on its front the floating foam, and earth on its head bears the dust."

*Dohá* 171.

Thus saying and embracing his feet, the king cried: Be gracious, O my lord, ever pitiful to the faithful in distress, and take this trouble on my behalf.

*Chaupái.*

Perceiving that the king was altogether under his influence, the hermit, the arch-deceiver, said: "Hearken, O king; I tell you truly there is nothing in the world I cannot do, and as you show yourself in thought, word, and action to be devoted to me, I will assuredly accomplish your object for you. The power of magical devices, penance, and spells works only when secrecy is maintained. If, O king, I act as cook and you serve, without any one knowing me, whoever tastes the food so prepared shall become amenable to your orders; and, further, any one who eats in their house will, I tell you, be in your power. Go now and carry out this scheme: make a vow for a whole year

*Dohá* 172.

and every day entertain a new set of a hundred thousand Bráhmans with their families; while I, as long as the vow lasts, will provide the daily banquet.

*Chaupái.*

In this way, O king, there will be very little trouble, and all the Bráhmans will be in your power. They again will perform sacrificial services, and thus the gods too will be easily won over. And I will give you a sign: I will not come in this dress, but by my delusive power I will bring away your family priest, and by the virtue of penance will make him look like myself and keep him here for the year; while I in his form will manage everything for you. The night is far gone, so now take rest; on the third day we will meet again. While you are asleep I by my penitential power will convey you home, both you and your horse.

*Dohá* 173.

I will then come in the form I have told you, and you will recognize me when I call you on one side and remind you of all this."

*Chaupái.*

The king, as ordered, retired to his couch, while the arch-deceiver took his wonted seat. Deep sleep came upon the weary king ; but what sleep for the other distraught with care? Then came the demon Kálaketu, who was the boar that had led the king astray, a great friend of the hermit king and skilled in manifold ways of deceit. He had a hundred sons and ten brothers, unmatched in villainy, the torment of the gods ; but they had all before this been killed in battle by the king, who saw the distress they had caused to the Bráhmans, saints, and powers of heaven. The wretch, nursing this old quarrel, combined with the hermit king in devising a plot for the destruction of his enemy. The prince overmastered by fate knew nothing of it.

*Dohá* 174.

A powerful foe, even though surprised alone, is not to be lightly regarded : to this day Ráhu, though he has nothing left but his head, is able to annoy both sun and moon.

*Chaupái.*

When the hermit king saw his ally he rose in great joy to meet him, and told his friend the whole story. The demon was glad, and said : "Hear, O king ; I am ready to settle your enemy if you will take my advice. Free yourself of all anxiety and sleep quietly here : without taking any medicine god has cured your complaint. I will sweep away the enemy, root and branch, and in four days will be back again." Having thus cheered the hermit king, the arch-deceiver went away in his wrath, and conveyed to the palace Pratáp-bhánu still asleep, both him and his horse ; the king he put to bed beside his queen, and the horse he tied up in the stall.

*Dohá* 175.

Again he carried off the king's family priest, and by supernatural power depriving him of his senses kept him in a cave in the mountain :

*Chaupái.*

While he himself assumed the priest's form and went and lay down on his sumptuous couch. At daybreak the king woke and was astonished to find himself at home. Much impressed with the

hermit's power, he rose and went out unperceived by the queen, and mounting his horse rode off to the wood, without any of the people in the city knowing it. When it was noon he returned, and in every house there was rejoicing, with music and singing. When he saw the family priest, he looked at him in amazement, remembering the work in hand. The three days seemed like an age, so absorbed was he in expectation of the false hermit's coming. When the appointed time had come, the priest took the king and told him the whole plot.

*Dohá* 176.

The king was delighted to recognize the Guru, and was too infatuated to have any sense left, but at once sent and invited a hundred thousand Bráhmans with their families.

*Chaupái.*

The priest superintended the cooking, and in accordance with sacred prescription concocted the six tastes in the four different ways,[1] preparing a most seductive banquet, with sauces and condiments more than any one could count. After dressing a great variety of meat, the wretch introduced into the dish some pieces of a Bráhman's flesh. He then summoned all the Bráhmans to the feast, and washed their feet and politely showed them to their places. But directly they began to touch the food, a voice came from heaven: "Up, up, all ye Bráhmans, and return to your homes; though the loss be great, yet taste not the food; there is Bráhman's flesh in the dish." Up rose all the holy men, believing the heavenly voice; while the king, distracted and out of his senses, overmastered by fate, could not utter a word.

*Dohá* 177.

Then cried the Bráhmans in their wrath, regardless of what must follow: "O foolish king, take birth in demon's form, yourself and all your family.

*Chaupái.*

O noble prince, you invited all this Bráhmanical company here simply to destroy us; but God has preserved our honour, and it is

[1]The six tastes are the 'sweet,' *madhur*; 'sour,' *ámla*; 'salt,' *lavan*; 'pungent,' *katu*; 'bitter,' *tikta*; and 'astringent,' *kashâya* The four ways in which food can be taken are *bhakhshya*, by mastication; *bhojya*, by deglutition; *choshya*, by sucking; and *lehya*, by lapping.

you and your race who are undone. You shall perish in the midst of your days, nor shall there be one left to offer libations to your ghost." When the king heard the curse he was terror-stricken. Again a voice came from heaven: "The Bráhmans have uttered this curse without due consideration: the king has committed no crime." All the Bráhmans were astounded when they heard the heavenly voice. The king hastened to the kitchen: there he found neither food nor Bráhman cook, and he turned away in deep thought, declared the whole history to the Bráhmans, and in his terror and distress threw himself upon the ground.

*Dohá* 178.

"Though you, O king, are guiltless, what is fated fails not; the past is unalterable: a Bráhman's curse is a terrible thing."

*Chaupái.*

So saying, all the Bráhmans went their way. When the people of the city heard the news they were much vexed and abused Fate, who had begun upon a swan and ended in making a crow. The demon conveyed the family priest to the palace and told the hermit all the tidings. Then the wretch despatched letters in all directions; a host of princes came in with their troops and with blast of trumpets beleaguered the city. Day after day there were battles of various kinds; all his champions fell in fight, after doing valorously, and the king with his brother bit the dust. Not one of Satya-ketu's family escaped; for a Bráhman's curse can never fail of accomplishment. Triumphing over their foe the chiefs refounded the city, and then, crowned with victory, returned to their own states.

*Dohá* 179.

Hearken, Bharadwája; whoever incurs the anger of heaven, for him a grain of dust becomes vast as Mount Meru, a father like the angel of death, and every rope a snake.

*Chaupái.*

Hearken, reverend sir; in due time this Raja with his family was born as a demon with ten heads and twenty arms, a formidable hero by name Rávan. The king's younger brother, Ari-mardan,

became the valiant Kumbha-karan, while the minister Dharm-ruchi became his half-brother, the world-famous Vibhíshan, the all-wise votary of Vishnu. As for the king's sons and servants, they were born a fierce demon crew, wretches, taking various shapes at will; wicked, monstrous, and devoid of knowledge; merciless, injurious, criminal; a torment to all creation beyond what words can tell.

*Dohá* 180.

Though born in the incomparably pure and holy family of Pulastya,[1] yet on account of the Bráhman's curse all were of hateful mien.

*Chaupái.*

The three brothers practised manifold penitential observances, severe beyond all description; the Creator drew nigh to witness them, and said, Son, I am well pleased, ask a boon. The ten-headed suppliantly clasped his feet and cried: Hear, O lord of earth; I would die at the hand of none save man or monkey. Brahma and I granted him his boon, saying: So be it, you have done great penance. Then the lord went to Kumbha-karan, and was astounded at his appearance: "If this wretch is always eating, the whole world will be laid waste." So he sent Sarasvati to turn his head, and he asked for six months' slumber.

*Dohá* 181.

Then he went to Vibhíshan and said: Son, ask a boon: and he asked for perfect love of God.

*Chaupái.*

After granting these boons Brahma departed, and they went home rejoicing. Now Maya had a daughter by name Mandodari, of exceeding beauty, a jewel of womankind, whom her father brought and made over to Rávan; and she became the demon's head-queen. Delighted at having obtained so good a wife, he next went and married his two brothers. In the middle of the ocean is a three-peaked mountain, by Brahma's contrivance most difficult of access.

[1]The patriarch Pulastya was the father of Visravas; and the latter, by three handmaids, who had been given him by Kuver, begot (1) Rávan and Kumbha-karan, (2) Vibhíshan, and (3) Khar and Súrpa-nakhá.

Here the demon Maya had constructed a vast palace of gold and jewels, more beautiful and charming than Bhogavati, the city of the serpent kings, or Indra's capital Amaravati, and called it Lanká, a name famous throughout the world.

*Dohá* 182-83.

The deep ocean was its moat, washing its four sides; and its massive walls were of gold set with jewels in a way that defies description. In every age the Demon King, whom Hari predestines, lives there with his army, as a mighty and puissant chief.

*Chaupái.*

There had dwelt great demon warriors, but all had been slain in battle by the gods; and now by Indra's commission it was occupied by a million guards of Kuver's. Rávan happened to hear of this and at once marshalled his army and went and besieged the place. When the Yakshas saw the vast host of fierce warriors they all fled for their lives. Thereupon Rávan inspected the whole of the city, and was so highly pleased with it that all his trouble was forgotten. Seeing that it was not only a beautiful, but also a naturally impregnable site, he fixed his capital there, and assigning quarters to his followers according to their several deserts made them all quite happy. Upon one occasion he sallied forth against Kuver, and carried away his chariot of flowers as a trophy.

*Dohá* 184.

Again from mere lightness of heart he went and overthrew Kailás, and after thus testing the prowess of his men of war waxed yet more jubilant than before.

*Chaupái.*

His happiness and prosperity; the number of his sons, his army and his allies; his conquests, his might and his superior wisdom, all grew day by day more and more, in the same way as avarice grows with gain. Thus too his brother, the stalwart Kumbha-karan, was a champion without a match in the world. After drinking his fill he slept for six months, and at his waking the three worlds trembled. If he had taken a meal every day the whole world would soon have been stript bare: so unspeakably

staunch in fight was he that no other hero could be compared to him. His eldest son was Meghnád, who held the first place among the world's champions ; before whom none could stand in the battle ; who was ever harassing the city of heaven.

*Dohá* 185.

And many other demons were there, each by himself able to subdue the whole world, such as the hideous Kumukh, the dauntless Akampan, Kulisa-radd with teeth like thunderbolts, the fiery Dhumra-ketu, and the huge Atikáya.

*Chaupái.*

Taking form at will, skilled in every kind of fraud, without ever a thought of piety or pity. One day the ten-headed was seated in court and reviewed his innumerable retainers, sons and grandsons, friends and servants, troops of demons, more than any one could count. On seeing the host, he swelled with pride and in fierce tones said : Hearken, all ye demon troops; the host of heaven are my enemies, nor dare to stand up in open fight, but flee away at the sight of my great army. There is one way of effecting their death, which I will declare ; now listen to it. Go ye and put a stop to all feasting of Bráhmans, to every sacrifice, oblation, and funeral rite :

*Dohá* 186.

then forthwith the faint and hungry gods will come out to meet me, and whether I slay them or let them go they will be equally in my power.

*Chaupái.*

Again he called for Meghnád and exhorted him to yet greater courage and resentment : " The strong and warlike gods, who venture to confront you, you most vanquish and bring here in chains." Up rose the son to perform his father's commands. In this manner he ordered all, and himself sallied forth, club in hand. As he marched the earth shook, the heaven thundered, and pains of premature labour overtook the pregnant spouses of the gods. The gods themselves, on hearing of Rávan's wrathful approach, sought the caves of Mount Meru. As he approached in turn each of the eight quarters of the globe, he found it deserted by its guardian. Again

and again he shouted the challenge to battle and vehemently scoffed at the gods, and mad with lust of blood traversed the whole universe in search of a foeman, nor could anywhere discover one.

*An interpolation.*

Nárad met him, and he said with a smile : "Saint, where are the gods? show them to me." Nárad was not pleased to hear of his villainy, and forthwith sent him to White-land. When he crossed the ocean and arrived on the other side he saw a company of women, and said to them : "Go, tell your husbands that the king of the demons is here ; then I will conquer them in battle and take you away to my own home." On hearing this speech an ancient dame waxed wroth and ran and seized him by the feet and threw him up in the air; then, after going a long way scratching and clawing, she gave him a good shake and pitched him with great violence into the middle of the sea.

*Dohá* 187.

Senseless, but by the Bráhman's blessing still alive, he sank down into Hell ; there with a roar sprang up again all unhurt, with a soul unmoved either by joy or sorrow.

*Chaupái.*

After taking and pillaging the Nágas' capital the enemy of heaven passed on to Báli's realm. When the Dwarf heard of Rávan's coming, and how he had scoffed at the gods' teacher, Nárad, the Lord infused his own strength into all the children playing in the streets, who ran and seized him and brought him into the town, while every man and woman in the place flocked to see the sight. "Where on earth can heaven have brought such a creature from, with its twenty arms and ten heads?" Though the guards bound him and vexed him sore, he would rather die than tell his name ; in the Dwarf's presence he was much confounded, and the Merciful then had him set at liberty. Off at once rushed the demon king without the least shame or hesitation.

*Dohá* 188-89.

Shameless, pitiless, and ever bent on mischief, the ten-headed miscreant thought to conquer Ráma. Hearken, Bharadwája ; if

49031

god is wroth with a man his diamonds turn to bits of glass that are not worth a cowry.

*Chaupái.*

Wherever he found a stray god or Bráhman he frightened him into payment of ransom, and this is the way he went on day and night, the black-hearted ruffian. Then in haste he came to Pampá-pur, the seat of the monkey-king Báli, and beheld the beautiful lake, that would charm the soul even of the greatest saint, where the monkey-king sat absorbed in contemplation. He smiled to see the ten-headed, and Rávan shouted in a fury: "You wretched, senseless, hypocritical ape, I no sooner heard your name than I came at once: have done with your cowardice and meet me in battle.

*Dohá* 190.

Unless you can vanquish me in combat your meditations are vain," said the demon king gnashing his 320 teeth.

*Chaupái.*

Said Báli: "Away, I want no fighting; be wise, and take your ten heads home. Your valour, friend, is undisputed, for I hear of your victories all over the world." But Báli's reiterated advice had not the slightest effect; and at last the monkey-king sprang up in a rage and seized Rávan and nipped him tight under his arms, and then forgot all about him for the space of ten months. One day as he raised his hands to offer a libation to the sun, Rávan slipped out of his clutches and ran away. Next he went, being still without either shame or scruple, to where the thousand-armed Sahasrabhuj was sporting in the water.

*Dohá* 191.

Ocean was troubled at Rávan's might: the court began to sink, and Sahasrabahu cried in a rage: What rival of mine is here to-day?

*Chaupái.*

Then he went and saw where Rávan stood, by whose giant arms the water was agitated. Potent in artifice as in strength of limb, he with a loud cry seized the king of Lanká and kept him tied up for some days in his stable,—a sight of wonder for his wives. He

was ashamed to tell his name, though the wise king was ever asking, and Rambhá and her companions danced about him and set a lighted torch to each of his ten heads. Then saint Pulastya came and set him free. Next he went and got cursed by Nala.

*Dohá* 192.

On the road he spied a most incomparably beautiful damsel, with sandal-wood, and flowers, and leaves in her hand, going to worship Tripurári.

*Chaupái.*

Urvasi was abashed at seeing him, but Rávan addressed her in gentle tones: Who are you, lady, and where are you going? She was too much overcome with modesty to give him an answer. Being mad with lust, he took no heed, but seized her by the hand, though she was the wife of Kuver's son. When he recognized her there came upon him remorse and repentance for the evil deed,[1] and much troubled at heart the king of Lanká returned to his capital. Urvasi went sadly to Alaka and told Kuvar Nala. In great wrath he uttered this curse: May the race of Rávan perish. The Curse went to Lanká, where Rávan was seated, and stood before him. He trembled with dismay at the sight.

*Dohá* 193.

Submitting to the curse, he thought within himself that he had never taken any tribute from the monks; so in a fury

*Chaupái.*

he sent four messengers to the holy men's hermitage, who on seeing them forgot all about the Supreme Spirit and asked them of their welfare, saying: Tell me, is all well with Lanká's king. "Reverend sir, all is well with him, and he wants your tribute money." On hearing this speech he was much alarmed, and forgetful of his vow began to think within himself: It is ill going empty-handed to a court where justice is not, and where a pack of villains are banded together. So he gave them a jar which he had filled with blood taken from his own body and made it over to the messengers saying: Go tell the king:

[1]Rávan and Kuver were both sons, by different mothers, of one father, Visravas, and Urvasi was thus Rávan's niece by marriage. Hence in violating her he had been guilty not only of adultery but also of incest.

*Dohá* 194.

If the jar is opened death will come upon you and your family. The messengers in haste took the jar to the king's court at Lanká.

*Chaupái.*

Rávan was pleased at the sight of the jar, and the messengers then told him what the saint had said. On hearing the curse his heart burned within him and he said: Take the jar away to the north and carefully put it in the ground where no one can find it. They took it to Janak's dominions and there buried it in a field. There Janak, preparing for a sacrifice, was driving a golden plough: the offspring of the saint's blood sprung up out of the furrow and was carried off by Garur. Her blessed name was at first Jánaki, but Nárad afterwards came and directed that it should be Síta, and explained all the circumstances as above related. The great saint then left: the messengers also returned to Lanká, and Lanká's lord, though worsted in four places, still greatly troubled the gods.

*Here ends the interpolation.*

The sun and moon; the wind; Varuna and Kuver; fire, time, and death, and every divine power; Kinnars, saints, men, gods, and serpents, all were turned out of their course. From one end of earth to the other every living creature, whether male or female, was made subject to Rávan. All in turn do his bidding and crouch suppliantly at his feet.

*Dohá* 195-96.

By his mighty arm he subdued the whole universe and left not a single soul independent, but acting on his own counsel exercised dominion over the whole round world. And many were the lovely dames he wedded after conquest, daughters of gods, and Yakshas and Gandharvs, and men, and Kinnars and Nágas.

*Chaupái.*

Whatever he told Indrajit to do was done in less time than it took to tell: hear now how the other chiefs acted to whom he gave orders. The whole demon crew, villainous at heart and foul of aspect, the torment of heaven, were ready for any outrage, disguising themselves by the assumption of various forms, and acting in every

way contrary to the Veda, in order to eradicate religion. Wherever they find a cow or a Bráhman they at once set fire to the city, town, or village ; pious observances are no longer anywhere in existence; no respect is paid either to scripture, or Bráhman, or spiritual instructor ; there is no faith in Hari, no sacrifice, no prayer, nor alms-giving, and no one would ever dream of hearing either Veda or Purána.

*Chhand* 18.

At a hint of prayer or of penance, of sacrifice, vigil, or fast,
Not a moment's rest, but he hied on its quest, with a vow it should be the last.
So the world was sunk in lawlessness ; all holy sounds were banned;
And to read a sacred text was death or exile from the land.

*Soraṭhá* 21.

The fearful oppression that the demons wrought is beyond description : bent on mischief, there was no limit to their evil-doing.

*Chaupái.*

The wicked all throve ; thieves and gamblers, those who coveted their neighbour's wife or goods, those who honoured neither father and mother nor the gods, and those who exacted service of better men than themselves. For people who act in this way, Bhawáni, resemble demons. Seeing the general persecution of religion, Earth was terror-stricken and dismayed : the weight of mountains, lakes, and seas is nothing so heavy as this one tyrant. She saw all faith perverted, and yet for fear of Rávan could say nothing. After some consideration she took the form of a cow and went to the spot where the gods and saints were gathered together, and with tears declared to them her distress. There was no help to be had from any one of them.

*Chhand* 19.

Gods and saints and heavenly minstrels, flocked they all to Brahma's throne;
With them Earth, a horned heifer, making sad and piteous moan.
Pondered Brahma in his wisdom : All vain is help of mine,
But a Lord immortal is thy Lord, be he my help and thine.

*Soratha* 22.

Take courage, O Earth, said Brahma, and remember Hari ; the Lord knows the distress of his servants and will put an end to this cruel oppression.

*Chaupái.*

All the gods sat in counsel : Where can we find the Lord and make our cry to him ? Said one, We must go to Vaikunth ; said another, His home is in the Ocean. Nay, this is the way of the Lord, he is ever manifest to a faithful and loving soul. Now, Girijá, I too was in the assembly and took occasion to say briefly : Hari is omnipresent everywhere alike, but, as I well know, is revealed by love. Tell me any place, time, or quarter of the heaven where the Lord is not. Present in all creation, animate or inanimate, passionless and unbiassed, he is revealed like fire by love. My words were approved by all, and Brahma exclaimed : Well said, well said.

*Dohá* 197.

The Creator was glad at heart and thrilled with delight, while his eyes filled with tears, and clasping his immortal hands he thus composedly and deliberately chanted his praises :

*Chhand* 20—23.

To the king of heaven be all glory given, refuge of creation in distress and care,
Priests and kine befriending, Hell's brief triumph ending, best beloved of Lachhmi, Ocean's daughter fair.
Heaven and earth's upholder, who than all men bolder dares to scan the secret of thy strange mysterious way ?
Ever kind and loving, humble souls approving, may thy gracious favour reach now to me, I pray.
Spirit all-pervading, fleshly sense evading, hail Mukund immortal, lord of blisfulness supreme,
Ever pure and holy, whom the Queen of Folly has no power to tangle in her world-deluding dream.
Glory, glory, glory, theme of endless story, sung by saints and sages in an ecstasy of love,
Daily, nightly gazing on the sight amazing, source of every blessing, Hari, lord of heaven above.
Triune incarnation, who at earth's creation, wert alone presiding, and other aid was none,
Though in prayer unable and my faith unstable, O great sin-destroyer, hear our hapless moan.

Life's alarms dispelling, all disasters quelling, comfort of the faithful, be our succour now;
All the gods implore thee, falling low before thee, with unfeigned submission of body, soul, and vow.
Lord God Bhagawána, Ved and eke Puráṇa, Sáradá and Seshnág, and all the saintly throng,
Find the theme too spacious, only know thee gracious; hasten then to help us in our hour of wrong.
In all grace excelling, Beauty's chosen dwelling, ark on life's dark ocean, home of all most sweet,
Gods and saints and sages, now this tempest rages, fly in consternation to clasp thy lotus feet.

*Dohá* 198.

Beholding the alarm of the gods and Earth, and hearing this devout speech, a dread voice came from heaven that removed all their doubt and anxiety:

*Chaupái.*

"Fear not, Indra and ye saints and sages; for your sake I am about to assume the form of a man, and with divided personality will take birth in the glorious solar race. For the severe penance practised by Kasyapa and Aditi I granted them the full boon they asked. In the form of Dasarath and Kausalya they shall take royal birth in the city of Kosala. In their house shall become incarnate the four brothers, the pride of the family of Raghu. I will fulfil all that Nárad predicted, by myself descending from heaven with my eternal spouse, and will remove the whole of earth's burden." On hearing the heavenly voice in the air the gods turned and were consoled, and Brahma exhorted Mother Earth, who forgot her fears in hopefulness.

*Dohá* 199.

Then Brahma proceeded to his own realm after thus instructing the gods: Go and worship Hari upon earth in form as monkeys.

*Chaupái.*

The gods went, every one to his own abode, and with Earth had rest. All the orders that Brahma had given they executed gladly and without delay. Taking birth on earth as monkeys of incomparable

strength and dignity, warriors with rocks and trees and claws for weapons, they confidently awaited Hari's coming, swarming in every mountain and forest, and divided among themselves into orderly troops. I have told you of their noble acts, and now you must hear of what was doing meanwhile elsewhere. The king of Avadh was named Dasarath, the jewel of the line of Raghu, well skilled in the Vedas, virtuous and wise, a defender of the faith, a sincere votary of Vishnu.

*Dohá* 200.

Kausalya and his other loving queens were all of holy life, faithful and affectionate to their lord, and full of humble devotion to Hari's lotus feet.

*Chaupái.*

One day the king was sad that he had no son, and going in haste to his Guru's abode fell at his feet with many entreaties and told him all his joys and sorrows. Vasishta in reply comforted him in every way: "Take courage, you will have four sons, who will be famous throughout the three worlds, and rid the faithful of all their fears." Then Vasishta summoned Saint Sringi to perform a sacrifice for the birth of a son. The saint devoutly offered the oblation, and the Fire-god appeared with the offering in his hand and cried in gracious tones: "I am pleased more than I can say; whatever Vasishta has imagined in his heart is all granted for your good. Take this oblation, O king, and divide it in such proportions as is proper."

*Dohá* 201.

Then the Fire-god vanished, after telling them all of all that had to be done. The king was transported with ecstasy and could not contain himself for joy.

*Chaupái.*

He at once sent for his loving wives, and Kausalya and the others came. To Kausalya he gave a half-share, and of the remaining half he made two portions, one of which he offered to Kaikeyi; what remained he again divided into two, which he

placed in the hands of Kausalya and Kaikeyi, and they gave them to Sumitrá, to her great delight. In this manner all the queens became pregnant, and they grew glad of heart with exceeding joy. From the day that Hari was conceived in their womb the whole world was fulfilled with happiness and prosperity, and the queens shone resplendent in the palace, full of beauty, virtue, and glory. Some little time was thus happily spent, till the day arrived for the Lord to be revealed.

*Dohá* 202.

Auspicious was the conjunction of the planets in an auspicious house; auspicious the moment; auspicious the day of the week and of the month; and full of delight was all creation, animate and inanimate, when Ráma, father of delights, was born :

*Chaupái.*

On the ninth day of the sweet and holy month of Chait; in the bright lunar fortnight; under Abhijit, his favourite constellation; on a seasonable day, neither hot nor cold, a holy time of rest for all; with soft, cool, fragrant breezes blowing; 'midst the delight of gods and heartfelt rapture of the saints; while the woods were full of blossoms as the hills with gems, and every river flowed a stream of nectar. When the Creator saw the time so fit, all the gods had their chariots equipped and came forth. The bright heaven was crowded with the host of them; troops of Gandharvas chanted heroic lays; flowers were rained down by handfuls; the sky resounded with the beat of kettledrums; serpents, saints, and gods hymned his praises, and each in his own fashion tendered him service.

*Dohá* 203.

Thus meekly did all the gods return to their several abodes when the Lord was revealed, who is the abode of the world, and in whom all the world finds rest.

*Chhand* 24—27.

From Kausalya's blessed womb the great god at last has come,
in response to a lost world's plaint,
And she gazes with what joy on the face of her dear boy, that
would rapture the soul of a saint.

A vision of delight, with his eyes so large and bright, and his body as a cloud dark and grand,
By the garland on his breast and his four arms confest Kharári, with a weapon in each hand.
With fingers locked in prayer she cries: How may I dare, O lord god immortal, thy boundless praise to tell,
Far above the world's confusion and reason's vain intrusion, whom all the scriptures witness incomprehensible.
Whom saints and holy sages have hymned through all the ages, the fountain of compassion, the source of every grace,
Who aye with Lachhmi reignest, thou, even thou, now deignest to be my son and succour thy sore-tried chosen race.
Though we know by revelation, heaven and earth and all creation, in each hair upon thy body may be found,
In my arms thou sweetly dreamest, O mystery supremest, far beyond the comprehension of a sage the most profound.
Smiled the lord at her devotion and would fain have set in motion the magic that dazzles the crowd,
Telling all he had done and the triumphs he had won, that his mother of her son might be proud.
But hurriedly she cried: My soul is terrified by these marvels, disperse them from my sight,
Let me see thee as a child, disporting free and wild, for in this is my greatest delight.
She spoke and he obeyed, and at once in fashion made as an infant began to cry.
Know that all who sing this lay and in faith to Hari pray shall in peace rest for ever when they die.

*Dohá* 204.

For the sake of Bráhmans, cows and gods, and saints he took birth as a man in a body formed at his own will, he who is beyond all form, or quality, or perception of the senses.

*Chaupái.*

On hearing the delightful sound of a baby's cries all the queens came greatly agitated; their glad handmaids ran hither and thither and all the people of the city were drowned in joy. When Dasarath knew he had a son born, his joy was like that of the blest in heaven; with his soul full of love and his body quivering with delight he sought to rise, but could not till he had collected himself: "The Lord, whose very name it is bliss to hear, has come to my house." Thus rejoicing at heart the king sent for minstrels to play, and next summoned the *guru* Vasishta, who came to the court with a

train of Bráhmans. He went and gazed upon the peerless babe, but its beauty and grace were beyond words to tell.

*Dohá* 205.

Then after performing the Nándi-mukh *Sráddh*[1] he completed every caste observance, and the king made offerings to the Bráhmans of gold, cows, plate, and jewels.

*Chaupái.*

The city was full of flags and banners and festal wreaths arranged in a manner that defies description. Showers of flowers fell from heaven, and every soul was rapt in bliss. There was a concourse of troops of women, who had come running in their ordinary dress just as they were at the time, with golden vases and salvers laden with things of good omen, singing as they entered the king's court. After passing their offerings round and round over the child's head they strew them on the ground, and again and again throw themselves at his feet, while bards and minstrels, singing men and choristers chant the solemn praises of Raghunáth. Every one made an offering of all that he had, and no one kept what was given him; while musk, sandal, and saffron were thrown about in such profusion that the streets were muddy with perfumes.

*Dohá* 206.

In every house there was music and the jubilant shout: "The fountain of joy has been revealed;" and all the men and women in the city were rejoicing everywhere.

*Chaupái.*

Both Kaikeyi and Sumitrá' too gave birth to a lovely boy. At that time the joy, the auspiciousness, and the crowds were more than Sarasvati or the serpent king could describe. The city of Avadh was as resplendent as it were Night going to meet her lord. The sun, abashed at the vision, faded into twilight, where the dusky clouds of incense were shot through with red gleams of *abír:* the piles of jewels in the temples were like stars, and the

[1] The *Nándi-mukh Sráddh* is a commemorative offering to the manes preliminary to any joyous occasion, such as initiation, marriage, &c., in which nine balls of meat are offered to the deceased father, grandfather, and great-grandfather; to the maternal grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather; and to the mother, paternal grandmother, and paternal great-grandmother.—*Williams.*

golden pinnacle of the palace as the gracious moon, while the murmuring sound of the muttered Veda in the houses was like the evening song of garrulous birds. Gazing upon the spectacle the Sun forgot himself, and a whole month passed without his knowing it.

*Dohá* 207.

The day was a month long, but the marvel was noticed of none: while the sun in his chariot stood still at gaze, how could there be any night?

*Chaupái.*

There was not one who observed the strange event, and at last the sun set, still chanting Ráma's praises. The gods, saints, and Nágas too, who had witnessed the spectacle, returned home congratulating themselves on their good fortune. I will even tell you of a deception I practised myself: hearken, Girijá, for I know your steadfast faith. Káka-bhusundi and I were there together in human form, without any one knowing it. Full of rapture, love, and delight, we roamed about the streets in ecstatic unconsciousness. Only one on whom rests the mercy of Ráma can attain to the knowledge of these acts of ours. At that time the king granted every one his heart's desire, whatever it might be that he had come for, bestowing on them elephants, carriages, horses, gold, cows, jewels, and all sorts of apparel.

*Dohá* 208.

All were satisfied from their very heart and invoked blessings upon him, saying: May all the boys live long, those lords of Tulsi Dás.

*Chaupái.*

In this manner some days were spent without any one taking thought of noon or night, till the king, knowing the time had come for naming the children, sent and called the wise seer, and after reverently greeting him thus spake: Holy father, be pleased to declare the names upon which you have secretly determined. "Their names are many and wonderful; I will tell them, O king, to the best of my ability. The storehouse of delights, the ocean

of joy, by whose spray the three worlds are gladdened, the very home of bliss, the Comforter of the universe, has for his name RÁMA ('the delight'). The bearer and supporter of the world is named Bharat ('the supporter'), while he whose very thought brings victory over the foe is celebrated in the Veda in his name Satrughna ('destroyer of enemies').

*Dohá* 209.

For the auspicious, the beloved of Ráma, the stay of the whole world, was reserved by saint Vasishta the noble name of Lakshman ('of auspicious appearance').

*Chaupái.*

After naming them the saint pondered in heart and said: "O king, your four sons are the very Veda itself; the saint's treasure; the believer's all in all; the darlings of Siva, who is delighted with their childish sports." Even from his earliest days Lakshman knew his dear lord and devoted himself to Ráma; while the affection of the two other brothers, Bharat and Satrughna, grew also as between master and servant. In both couples one was dark, the other fair; and their mother, as she gazed upon their loveliness, would break a blade of grass to avert the evil eye. Though all four were full of amiability, beauty, and intellect, yet Ráma was a higher joy: his kindliness of heart was like the bright moon, which manifested itself in the radiance of a most winning smile; while now in the cradle, and now on her lap, his mother fondled him and called him her own dear darling.

*Dohá* 210.

The omnipresent god, who has neither passion nor quality, nor sensation of pleasure, and who is from everlasting, lay a babe in Kausalya's arms, overcome by devout affection.

*Chaupái.*

With all the beauty of a myriad Loves; dark of hue as the lotus or a heavy rain-cloud; the glistening nails on his rosy feet like clustered pearls on the leaves of the lily; the marks of the thunderbolt, the flag, and the elephant-goad distinctly to be seen; the tinkling of his anklets enough to charm a saint; with girdled waist and

dimpled body and deep navel, such as no one could believe who had not seen; with long arms covered with many jewels and a lovely set of tiger's claws upon his breast; with necklace of gems and sparkling amulet, and soul-ravishing mark of the Bráhman's feet; with shell-marked neck and exquisite chin, and a face flushed with the beauty of all the Loves; with well-matched teeth and ruddy lips, and nose and forehead-mark beyond description; with beautiful ears and charming cheeks, and lisping prattle most delightful to hear; with eyes dark and full as the lotus, and heavy brows and a fair pendant on his forehead; with lustrous curling hair that his mother was ever delighting to stroke; with his body clothed in little yellow drawers, crawling on knees and hands upon the ground; neither Scripture nor Seshnág could do justice to his beauty, nor without a vision could any one imagine it.

*Dohá* 211.

The all-blissful god, who is above the reach of delusion and transcends all intellect, speech, and perception of the senses, became subject to the strong love of his parents and sported like an innocent babe.

*Chaupái.*

In this way Ráma, the father of the universe, showed himself the delight of the people of Kosala; and they who love their god, O Bhawáni, show themselves like his earthly parents. But his enemies, though they struggle for ever, will never extricate themselves from the bonds of existence. The delusive power that has subdued all life, whether in animate or inanimate creation, trembles before the lord, who with the play of his eyebrows forces it to dance like a puppet. If we leave such a lord, whom else can we supplicate? Neither in thought, word, nor deed be over-wise; god is merciful only to those who pray. Thus the lord sported as a child to the delight of all the people of the city; and now his mother would take and dandle him in her arms, and now put him down and rock him in his cradle,

*Dohá* 212.

so lost in love that day and night succeeded one another unobserved, while in her fondness for her boy she kept singing to him nursery songs.

*Chaupái.*

One day his mother, after washing and dressing him, put him to sleep in his cradle and prepared an offering for presentation to her patron divinity. When the service was over and she had made her oblation, she returned to the place where she had dressed the food; but when she came there she beheld Ráma in the act of eating. In a great fright she ran to the nursery and there found the child again sleeping; but coming back once more she still saw the boy. Then she trembled and was much disturbed in mind, for she saw two children, one here and one there, and was utterly bewildered; saying, Are my own senses at fault, or is something else the matter? When Ráma saw his mother's distress he broke out into a merry laugh,

*Dohá* 213.

and exhibited to her his whole marvellous form; with a myriad worlds gleaming on each individual hair of his body;

*Chaupái.*

with unnumbered suns and moons, Sivas and Brahmas; with many mountains, rivers, oceans, lands, and forests; with Time, Fate, Merit, Demerit, Nature, and every power there manifested, even though unknown by name. When she beheld the awful vision she stood terror-stricken, with hands clasped in prayer; for she saw both the life which Máya forces into motion and the Faith that sets it free. With quivering body and speechless mouth she closed her eyes and bowed her head at his feet. Seeing his mother thus overpowered with amazement, Ráma again assumed the form of a child. But her terror left her not, while she hymned his praises, saying: I have regarded the great Father as my own offspring. Again and again Hari exhorted his mother, See, my mother, that you tell this to no one;

*Dohá* 214.

and as often did Kausalya meekly reply with clasped hands: See you too, my lord, that this delusive power of yours never again visits me.

*Chaupái.*

Hari indulged in every kind of childish amusement, to the great delight of his attendants; and after a little time all the

brothers grew to be big boys, gladdening every one about them. Then the Guru came to perform the tonsure, and again the Bráhmans received large offerings. The four lads run about and divert themselves in all sorts of pretty ways; and the Lord, whose thoughts, words, and acts transcend every human sense, plays in Dasarath's courtyard. If the king when at dinner called him he would not leave his playmates and come till Kausalya herself went for him, when he would toddle along with her as fast as he could. He whom the scripture declares to be incomprehensible, of whom Siva could find no end, is picked up by his mother and carried off in a pet, and his father with a smile takes him in his lap, though grimy all over with dust.

*Dohá* 215.

Quickly glancing here and there during the meal, as soon as he got a chance he would run away with a scream of delight, stuffing his mouth full of rice and curds.

*Chaupái.*

His pretty innocent childish sports have been sung by Sarasvati, Seshnág, Sambhu, and the Vedas; and he whose soul does not warm to them has been brought into the world by God to no purpose. When the brothers were all grown up, the Guru and their father and mother invested them with the sacred thread, and Ráma went to his Guru's house to study. In a short time he mastered all knowledge. The four Vedas are but the breath of his mouth, and for him to study was a joke indeed. When they were proficient in scholarship and politeness and morality they began to practise all princely sports. With bow and arrow in hand they showed so fair that all creation was ravished at the sight; and as the brothers passed along the road every man and woman stopt to gaze at them.

*Dohá* 216.

Ráma was gracious to all; and not a soul in Kosala, man or woman, young or old, but held him dearer than life.

*Chaupái.*

Taking his brother with him as a companion, he would go to the forest to hunt; there selecting for death the noblest game, he every

day brought and showed it to the king; and each beast, slain by his shaft, after death went straight to heaven. Taking his meals in company with his younger brother, and ever obedient to his parents' commands, the gracious god omitted nothing that could please the people. He gave his mind to hear the Vedas and Puránas, and then himself taught his brother. Rising at break of day, he first saluted his parents and the priest, and then, after obtaining their sanction, busied himself with work in the city. The king was glad of heart when he saw his mode of life.

*Dohá* 217.

The all-pervading, indivisible, passionless, eternal God, who is without attributes, or name, or form, performs many wonders for the sake of his faithful people.

*Chaupái.*

I have now sung all these his doings: hearken attentively to the remainder of my story. The great and wise saint Viswamitra had chosen a fair hermitage in the forest, where he gave himself up to prayer, sacrifice, and meditation. The demons Márícha and Subáhu, on beholding the preparations for sacrifice, feared greatly and hastened to disturb them. The saintly son of Gádhi was pained and full of thought: There is no killing these accursed demons without Hari. Then he reflected: The lord has become incarnate to relieve earth of its burdens. I have now an excuse for going to visit him, and after entreaty made will bring back with me the two brothers. Now I will feast my eyes with the sight of him who is the abode of all knowledge, piety, and goodness.

*Dohá* 218.

His manifold longing brooked no delay on the road, and after bathing in the stream of the Sarjú he proceeded to the king's court.

*Chaupái.*

When the Rája heard of the saint's arrival he went to meet him with a retinue of Bráhmans, and prostrating himself reverently on the ground before him, took and seated him on his own throne; then laved his feet and offered him religious honours, saying: "There is no one so blest as I am to-day;" and had various kinds of food

prepared for him. The great saint was highly pleased. Next, the king brought his four sons into the presence. On seeing Ráma the saint forgot his detachment from the world and was as enraptured with his lovely face as is the *chakor* with the full moon. Then said the glad king: "Reverend sir, this favour is unparalleled: what is the cause of your coming? Tell me, and I will not delay to accomplish it." "There is a crew of demons that trouble me, and I am come to you, O king, with a request. Let me have Raghunáth and his brother; the demons' death is all I desire.

*Dohá* 219.

Give them, O king, gladly, without any selfish folly; for you it will be a meritorious and honourable act, and it will also turn out well for them."

*Chaupái.*

When the king heard this cruel request his heart beat fast and all the brightness of his face grew dim: "In my old age I have begotten four sons; O sir, you have spoken without consideration. Ask of me land, cattle, goods, and treasure, and I will gladly give you all I have at once. Nothing is dearer than the life of the body; but even that I would give in a minute. All my sons are dear to me as my own soul, and, O sir, I cannot spare you Ráma. What is this pretty little boy of mine against a fierce and terrible demon?" On hearing the king's words so fraught with love, the wise saint was glad of heart. Then Vasishta much exhorted him, and the king's doubts were dispelled. Obediently he sent for the two boys and pressed them to his heart and fervently exclaimed: "My two boys are my very life; but you, holy sir, are now their only father."

*Dohá* 220.

The king consigned the boys to the saint, again and again blessing them. Then they went to their mother's apartment and bowed the head at her feet.

*Sorathá* 23.

Glad to relieve the saint of his alarm, the two lion-hearted heroes set forth, oceans of compassion, resolute of purpose, the whole world's champions.

*Chaupái.*

Bright-eyed, broad-chested, long of arm, dark of hue as the lotus or the *tamál* tree ; with quiver at side pendent from a yellow sash, and in either hand arrows and a comely bow, so marched the two brothers, one dark, the other fair, the treasure that Viswamitra had acquired. "I recognize the lord god Brahmanya-deva in the child who thus on my account has left his own father." So thought the saint; and as he went he pointed out Táraká, who on hearing his voice rushed up in a fury. With one arrow Hari took her life, but recognizing her abject condition gave her a place in his own heaven. Then the saint knew he had found his lord, but yet instructed him, the all-wise. As they travelled they felt neither hunger nor thirst; such their incomparable strength of body and glorious vigour.

*Dohá* 221.

After taking the lord to his own hermitage he made over to him every kind of weapon, and gave him herbs and roots and fruit to eat, knowing him to be ever gracious to men of holy life.

*Chaupái.*

At daybreak Raghurái said to him: "Go and make ready the sacrifice, and fear not." The brotherhood began preparing the oblation, while he remained to guard the sacrificial fire. On hearing of this, the demon Márícha rushed up in a fury with his army to disturb the saint. Ráma smote him with a headless shaft, and he fell a hundred leagues the other side of ocean. Then he slew Subáhu with an arrow of fire, while his brother routed the whole demon host. When they had thus slain the demons and restored peace to the Bráhmans, the whole company of gods and saints began to hymn their praise. There Raghurái then stayed a few days and showed kindness to the hermits, who devoutly repeated to him many legends of the Puránas, though he knew them all before. Then the saint respectfully informed him: "There is a sight, my lord, which is worth your going to see." When Raghunáth heard of the ordeal of the bow, he gladly accompanied the noble sage. On the way he spied a hermitage without bird, deer, or any living creature near it, and observing a remarkable stone enquired of the saint about it, who in reply gave him the whole history.

*Dohá* 222.

"Gautama's wife was by a curse turned into a hard rock, and is now longing for the dust of your lotus feet: O Raghubír, show mercy upon her."

*Chhand* 28—31.

At the touch so sweet of his hallowed feet she awoke from her long unrest
And meekly adored her sovereign lord, awaiting his high behest.
With speechless tongue, limbs all unstrung, and eyes that streamed with tears,
She fell at his feet in rapture meet, far blest above all her peers.
Then bolder grown by the favour shown, with a faith that himself had given,
She dared to raise her hymn of praise: Great Spirit, high lord of heaven,
Save me, O save, thy succour I crave, holy god, sinful wretch though I be,
Rávan's conquering foe, joy of all else below, who toil upon life's troubled sea.
Though the saint cursed me sore in the ill days of yore, now I hold it a blessing most sweet,
For my own eyes have seen my Redeemer, and I ween Siva only my rapture could mete.
Witless and weak, one only boon I seek; as the bee within the lotus loves to stay,
May my soul upon thy feet, O my god, I thee entreat, dwell in rapture never ending night and day:
Holy feet, the adoration of the lord of all creation, and source of the stream divine,
Which on Siva's head descended, this day have condescended to rest on this vile head of mine.
Thus full of jubilation, with oft-renewed prostration, did Gautama's long lost bride,
With the boon she most had craved, thus graciously vouchsafed, return to her husband's side.

*Dohá* 223.

Thus the benevolent lord Hari is compassionate beyond our deserts. Worship him, says poor Tulsi Dás, and cease from all wrangling and hypocrisy.

*Chaupái.*

Ráma and Lakshman accompanied the saint to the world-purifying Ganges. Both the lord and his younger brother reverently saluted it, and Ráma was delighted beyond measure, as the

son of Gádhi told him the legend how the heavenly stream had come down upon earth. Then the lord and the hermits performed their ablutions and the Bráhmans received manifold gifts. The hermits' champion went on his way rejoicing, and quickly drew near to the capital of Videha. When Ráma beheld the beauty of the city, he and his brother were delighted at the many ponds and wells, and rivers and streams, with water of ambrosial purity and jewelled flights of steps; where the hum of bees, drunk with nectar, made a delicious sound, and birds of all kinds were softly cooing; as the lilies expanded their many-coloured petals, and a cool, soft, fragrant breeze was ever delightful.

*Dohá* 224.

On all four sides the city was bright with flower-gardens, orchards, and groves, the haunt of innumerable birds, and full of fruit and flowers and verdure.

*Chaupái.*

The beauty of the city is not to be told; wherever one went there was something to charm the soul. Handsome bazárs and gorgeous upper-rooms all studded with jewels, as though the Creator had fashioned them with his own hands; thriving bankers and traders, rich as Kuver himself, sitting with all their various goods displayed; fine squares and beautiful streets, that were constantly sprinkled with fragrant waters; magnificent temples to all the gods, as bright as if they had been painted by Kámdev himself; all the people of the city, both men and women, prosperous, well-dressed, virtuous, pious, intelligent, and accomplished. But Janak's palace was such a masterpiece that the gods tired themselves with looking at it, and the mind was quite overcome by the sight of the Fort, for it seemed to have appropriated to itself all that was most beautiful in the world.

*Dohá* 225.

With glistening white walls and doors of gold with gems set in different devices, the exquisite mansion where Síta lived was far too lovely for words to describe.

*Chaupái.*

All the city gates were most massive with panels of adamant, and were thronged with princes and their retinues of mimists, bards,

and heralds. The vast and well-built stables were at all hours of the day crowded with horses, elephants, and chariots ; and the ministers, generals, and warriors all had residences in the same style as the king. Outside the city, by pool and stream, the multitudinous princes had pitched their different camps. On seeing a fine mango grove, a most agreeable and convenient spot, the descendant of Kusika exclaimed : This is just what I like ; let us stay here, Raghubír. Very well, my lord, answered the gracious god ; and there they alighted with all their hermit train. When the king of Mithilá heard the news that the great saint Viswamitra was come—

*Dohá* 226.

taking with him his ministers and many gallant fighting men and noble Bráhmans and the chief of his kinsmen,[1] in this fashion the king went forth rejoicing, to meet the prince of sages.

*Chaupái.*

Bowing to the ground, he made obeisance, and the saint gladly gave him his blessing. Then the king respectfully saluted all the hermit train and congratulated himself on his good fortune. After making many enquiries as to his health and welfare, Viswamitra led the king to a seat, and at that very time arrived the two brothers who had gone to see the garden, one dark, the other fair, in childhood's tender bloom, the joy of all beholders, ravishing the senses of the whole world. When Raghupati came, all rose and Viswamitra seated him by his side. All were charmed at the sight of the two brothers ; their eyes filled with tears and their body thrilled with rapture, and the king especially was beside himself with joy[2] on beholding their sweet and lovely appearance.

*Dohá* 227.

Though feeling himself overpowered with love, the king discreetly restrained himself, and bowing his head at the saint's feet said in suppressed accents choking with emotion :

[1] The words rendered, 'the chief of his kinsmen,' may also be taken to mean 'his *guru* (Satánand) and his kinsmen.'

[2] This line, *Bhayáu Videha videha bisekhi*, contains a play upon words which cannot be preserved in a translation. A literal rendering would be : In particular Videha (*i.e.*, Janak, the king of Videha) became really *videha* (*i.e.*, without a body).

*Chaupái.*

"Tell me, my lord, who are these two lovely children ; are they the glory of a saintly family, or the bulwarks of a kingly line ? or are they the double impersonation[1] of the Supreme Spirit, whom scripture declares to be unutterable. My mind, ordinarily free from worldly attachment, wearies itself with gazing upon them, as the *chakor* in gazing upon the moon. Therefore, sir, I beg you to tell me the truth, and to conceal nothing. My love grows with looking, and my soul perforce is withdrawn from divine contemplation." Said the saint with a smile: "You have spoken well, O king ; your word is always true; there is not a living creature that does not love these boys." Ráma smiled to himself on hearing this. "They are the sons of Dasarath, the glory of the line of Raghu, and the king has sent them to help me.

*Dohá* 228.

Ráma and Lakshman by name, these two brothers, as strong as they are good and beautiful, with their companions, protected my sacrifice and vanquished all the demons in battle."

*Chaupái.*

Said the king : "O saint, when I behold your feet I cannot tell how richly I am rewarded for any former good deeds. These pretty twins have conferred a happiness upon you, the supremely happy. Their innocent mutual affection is indescribable in words ; a delight to the inmost soul. Hear me, sir, cried the king in his rapture : It is like the natural union between the universal soul and the soul of man." Again and again the king gazed upon the Lord, with quivering body and heart bursting with emotion. Then with courteous phrase and bowed head he escorted the saint to the city and there assigned him apartments, which were bright and cheerful at all times of the day; and finally, after further homage and proffers of service, the king took his leave and returned to the palace.

*Dohá* 229.

When Ráma and the hermits had taken food and rested a little, he went and sat down by his brother's side : now it still wanted an hour to sunset,

[1] The two manifestations are *nirgun* and *sagun*, the bodiless and the embodied.

*Chaupái.*

and Lakshman had at heart a great longing to go and see Janak's city; but again, for fear of his brother and respect for the saint, he said nothing out loud, but was smiling to himself. Ráma understood what was passing in his mind, and being ever considerate to his followers was glad, and with a most modest and submissive smile, after begging permission of his *guru* to speak, said: Sir, Lakshman wishes to see the city, but out of respect for you is afraid to speak. If you will allow me, I will show him the place and quickly bring him back again. The saint replied most affectionately: O Ráma, how can you do aught but good? the guardian of the bridge of religion, the loving benefactor of all faithful servants.

*Dohá* 230.

Go, blessed pair of brothers, and see the city, and gladden the eyes of all the people by the sight of your beauty.

*Chaupái.*

After bowing at the saint's feet they went, these two brothers, the delight of the eyes of the whole world. When the children in the market-place saw their exceeding beauty, their eyes and their very soul fastened greedily upon them. Clad in yellow apparel, with belt and quiver at their side, with graceful bow and arrows in hand, a lovely pair, one dark, the other fair of hue, with sandal-wood *tilak* to match their complexion; with lion-like waist and long arms, and breast adorned with string of elephant pearls, with shapely ears and lotus eyes, and moonlike face to assuage the three kinds of pain; with golden flowers for earrings, so beautiful as to steal the heart of every beholder; with a bewitching glance and fair arched eyebrows, and a star on the forehead that seemed beauty's own stamp;

*Dohá* 231.

With jaunty cap on comely head, with black curly locks, the two brothers were all-beautiful from head to foot and exquisite in every part.

*Chaupái.*

When the citizens heard that the princes were come to see the town, they all left their own business and started off like beggars to pillage a treasury. When they beheld the easy grace of the two brothers they were glad indeed, and their eyes were rewarded. The maidens peeping from the windows of the houses at once fell in love with Ráma's beauty, and in amorous strain addressed one another: They surpass in beauty a thousand Loves: neither among gods, nor men, nor demons, nor serpents, nor deified saints has beauty such as theirs ever been heard of. As for Vishnu with his four arms, Brahma with his four heads, and Purári with his five faces and wondrous attire, and all the other gods, there is not one in the whole universe whose beauty, my friend, can be compared to theirs.

*Dohá* 232.

Of tender age, the very home of beauty, equally lovely, whether dark or fair, as though a myriad myriad loves had been lavished on each individual limb of their body.

*Chaupái.*

Tell me, friend, is there any one in human form who would not be charmed at the sight of such beauty? Said one in gentle loving tones: Hear, my dear, what I have been told: this pretty pair of young cygnets are the two sons of king Dasarath. They have protected the sacrifice of saint Viswamitra and slain in battle the invincible demons. The lovely child with dark complexion and lotus eyes, who quelled the pride of Márícha and Subáhu, and bears the bow and arrows in his hand, is the sweet son of Kausalyá, by name Ráma. The fair youth in gallant attire, who also has bow and arrows in hand and follows Ráma, is named Lakshman, and is his younger brother. Sumitrá, you must know, is his mother.

*Dohá* 233.

After befriending the Bráhman and on the road setting free the sage's wife, the two brothers have come here to see the tournament. On hearing this all the ladies were delighted.

*Chaupái.*

Said one, after regarding Ráma's beauty: Here is a bridegroom worthy of Jánaki. If the king does but see them, he will abjure

his vow and insist upon a marriage with them. Said another: The king knows who they are, and has received both them and the saint with all honour. He has not, however, gone back from his vow, but mastered by fate persists in his folly. Said another: If god is good, and is certain to reward every man according to his deserts, then here is the bridegroom Jánaki will wed; about this, my dear, there can be no doubt. When such a union is brought about by destiny, every one will be satisfied. O friend, I am deeply moved by the thought that when married he may at some time come here,

*Dohá* 234.

otherwise there is no chance of my seeing him; but if I have accumulated sufficient merit in my previous existences, the union will surely take place.

*Chaupái.*

Said another: Friend, you have spoken well; this is a marriage that will please every one. Said another: Siva's bow is hard to bend, and this dark lad is of delicate frame: it is really a most unfair test. Hearing this, another soft-voiced maiden said: I have once and again heard say of them that though slight in appearance their strength is great. Touched by the dust of his lotus feet, the guilty Ahalya attained salvation; and he will never rest till he has broken the bow; this is a belief out of which I am no how to be cheated. When the Creator fashioned Síta he predestined for her this dark-complexioned bridegroom. On hearing these words all were glad and softly exclaimed: May it indeed prove so.

*Dohá* 235.

In their gladness of heart the bevy of fair-faced, bright-eyed dames shower down flowers, and wherever the two brothers went there was all the joy of heaven.

*Chaupái.*

Now they reached the eastern quarter of the city where the lists had been prepared for the tournament. In the midst of a fair and spacious paved area a spotless altar had been gorgeously

adorned, with a broad golden platform all round for the reception of the princes, and close behind another circular tier for the spectators, of somewhat greater height and elegantly decorated, where all the people of the city might come and sit. Close to this was another large and beautiful gallery of glistening white, painted in diverse colours, whence ladies might view the spectacle with due decorum, according to their family rank. The children politely show the two lords all the preparations, and with pleasant voice keep telling them what this is and that is,

*Dohá* 236.

thus in their affection finding a pretext for frequently touching their lovely person; while they thrill all over with delight as again and again they gaze on the twin brothers.

*Chaupái.*

When they perceived that Ráma was won by their devotion, they lovingly explain the different places, each according to his own fancy calling away the two brothers, who in their kindness are ever ready to come. Ráma shows Lakshman everything, still talking in light and merry tone; and he, in obedience to whose fiat Maya in a moment of time created the entire universe, out of compassion to his faithful people, feigns amazement at the sight of a tourney-ground. When they had seen all the show they return to their guru in alarm at being so late; and he, by whose awe Terror itself is dismayed, thus manifests the transcendent virtue of prayer. With many kind and courteous phrases they reluctantly take leave of the children;

*Dohá* 237.

and meekly and submissively, with mingled awe and love, they bow the head at the guru's feet, nor sit down till they obtain his permission.

*Chaupái.*

When it was dusk the saint gave the word and all performed their evening devotions, and in the recital of sacred legends spent two watches of the solemn night. Then the saint retired to his couch and the two brothers began to shampoo his feet; they

whose lotus feet the holiest of men longing to behold practise all kinds of penance and meditation, even they, these two brothers, mastered by love, affectionately shampooed their master's lotus feet. At last, when the saint had so ordered again and again, Ráma himself retired to rest, while Lakshman pressed his feet to his heart and reverently caressed them with emotions of exquisite delight. Again and again the lord said: Sleep, my brother; and at last he laid himself down, but with the divine feet still in his lap.

*Dohá* 238.

When the night was spent, at the first sound of cock-crow, Lakshman arose; and next, before the saint, woke the lord of the universe, the all-wise Ráma.

*Chaupái.*

After performing all the customary acts of purification and going to bathe, they bowed before the guru, and by his permission went out to gather flowers, as befitted the time. As they went they espied a beautiful garden of the king's, where reigned perpetual Spring, planted with ornamental trees of every kind, and overhung with many-coloured creepers, so rich in bud and fruit and flower that in its abundance it put to shame even the tree of paradise; while the peacocks danced responsive to the music made by the feathered choir of *chátak*, *koil*, parrot, and *chakor*. In the midst of the garden a lovely lake shone bright with jewelled steps of varied design; its pure expanse gladdened with many-coloured lotuses and the cooing of water-birds and the hum of bees.

*Dohá* 239.

Both the lord and his brother were delighted at the sight of the lake and the garden. What a charming pleasaunce must that have been which pleased even Ráma.

*Chaupái.*

After looking all about and asking leave of the gardeners they began in high glee to gather leaves and flowers. At that very time Síta too came there, having been sent by her mother to visit the shrine of Girijá. With her came all her young and lovely companions, singing glad songs. Now Girijá's shrine was close

to the lake, beautiful beyond description, the delight of all beholders. When she and her attendants had bathed in the pool, she approached the goddess with a glad heart, and after adoration paid with much devotion begged of her a handsome and well-matched bridegroom. One of her attendant damsels, who had strayed away to look at the garden, chanced to see the two brothers, and returned to Síta quite love-smitten.

*Dohá* 240.

When her companions observed what a state she was in, her body all in a tremble and her eyes full of tears, they asked in gentle tones: Declare the cause of this rapture.

*Chaupái.*

"There have come to see the garden two princes, of tender age and charming in every way; one dark of hue, the other fair, but how can I describe them? voice is sightless and eyes are dumb." All the damsels were delighted at her speech, and perceiving the intense longing in Síta's bosom, one of them exclaimed: My dear, they must be the king's sons, who, as I hear, arrived yesterday with the saint, who completely fascinated with their beauty and stole away the hearts of all the women in the city. Every one is talking of their loveliness; we really must see them; they are worth seeing. These words were most grateful to Síta, whose eyes were restless with longing. With her kind friend to lead the way, she followed, nor did any one know that it was an old love.

*Dohá* 241.

Remembering Nárad's words, she was filled with holy devotion and anxiously turned her gaze on every side, like a startled fawn.

*Chaupái.*

When he heard the sound of the golden bangles on her hands and feet, Ráma thought within himself, and then said to Lakshman: Imagine Love triumphant over the whole world to be now sounding the kettledrum of victory. So saying he again looked in that direction, and, like the moon on the *chakor*, flashed Síta's face upon his sight. His eyes became as immoveably fixed as though Nimi, the inking god, had fled in confusion from his wonted post. Beholding

her beauty he was enraptured; but his admiration was all within, and utterance failed him. As though the great Architect, after creating the world, had put before it in visible form all the skill with which he had fashioned it; or as if the Beautiful had been beautified into a temple of beauty and illuminated by a sudden flash of torchlight: but all the similes of the poets are stale and hackneyed; where can I find any likeness to Jánaki?

*Dohá* 242.

Dwelling in heart on Síta's beauty and reflecting on his own good fortune, the pure-souled god thus addressed his brother in terms appropriate to the occasion:

*Chaupái.*

Brother, this is the very daughter of king Janak, for whom the tournament has been ordained. She has come with her attendants to worship Gauri, and a train of light marks her path through the garden. At the sight of her divine beauty, my ordinarily placid bosom is agitated; God alone knows the cause, but of a truth, brother, my left side is throbbing as though for coming good fortune. It has always been a mark of the race of Raghu that they never set their heart on evil courses; and thus I am confidently assured that all will be well; for I have never even in a dream looked upon another's man's wife to long after her. And rare indeed in the world are the men who neither turn their back upon the foe in battle nor covet their neighbour's wife, and from whom no beggar meets a rebuff.

*Dohá* 243.

Thus discoursing to his brother, and with his soul enamoured of Síta's beauty, like a bee sucking honey from a flower, he drank in the loveliness of her face.

*Chaupái.*

Síta kept looking anxiously all round in doubt as to where the princes had gone. Wherever fell her fawn-like glance, it seemed a rain of glistering lotus flowers. Then her companions pointed out to her under the shade of the creepers the two lovely youths, the one dark, the other fair of hue. Her eyes, on beholding

their beauty, were filled with longing and with the gladness of one who has found a long-lost treasure. Wearied with gazing upon Ráma's charms, her eyelids forgot to wink, and her whole frame was fulfilled with desire, as is the partridge when it sees the autumnal moon. Receiving Ráma into her heart by the pathway of vision, she craftily closed upon him the doors of her eyelids. When her companions saw her thus overcome they were too much abashed to utter a word.

*Dohá* 244.

Then emerged the twin brothers from the shade of the arbour, like two spotless moons from a riven cloud.

*Chaupái.*

Two gallant champions, the perfection of beauty, like a white lotus and a dark ; with their hair parted like a raven's wing on their comely head, and here and there bedecked with bunches of flower-buds ; their forehead bright with the *tilak* and beads of perspiration, and their graceful ears adorned with ornaments ; with arched eye-brows and curly locks and eyes bright as a lotus bud ; with lovely chin and nose and cheeks, and a gracious smile enslaving every soul ; such beauteous features as I could never describe ; they would put to shame a myriad Loves. With a string of jewels on his breast, with exquisitely dimpled neck, and powerful arms like the trunk of some young elephant, in whom Kámdev had become incarnate ; with the flowers and cup of leaves in his left hand, the dark prince, O my friend, is beautiful exceedingly.

*Dohá* 245.

As her companions gazed upon the two glories of the Solar race, with their lion-like waist and bright yellow attire, very abodes of bliss and amiability, they lost all self-consciousness.

*Chaupái.*

Yet one, summoning up courage, grasped Síta by the hand and said : You can at any time meditate upon Gauri ; why not now look at the princes? Then the modest Síta unclosed her eyes and saw before her the two scions of Raghu. As she gazed on Ráma, all beautiful from head to foot, and remembered her father's vow, she was

greatly agitated. When her companions saw her thus overcome they all cried as if in alarm: "It is getting late;" and one added with an inward smile: "I will come again at this time to-morrow." On hearing these meaning words Sita was abashed and said, as if in fear of her mother: "It is late indeed;" then summoning up resolution, she fixed the image of Ráma in her heart and turned to go; but again she thought how entirely it all depended upon her sire,

*Dohá* 246.

and under pretence of looking at a deer, or bird, or tree, again and again she turned her head, and each time that she beheld the beauteous Raghubír her love was augmented not a little.

*Chaupái.*

The thought of Siva's unyielding bow made her wild, and as she went she kept in her heart the image of the dark-hued swain. When the Lord perceived that she was going, he drew in his heart with the indelible ink of love a charming sketch of her infinite beauty and virtue and blissful devotion. Again she sought Bhawáni's shrine, and after embracing her feet, thus prayed with clasped hands: "Glory, glory, glory to thee, O daughter of the mountain king, as fixed in thy gaze on Siva's face as is the partridge on the moon; O mother of Ganes and Kartikeya; great mother of the world; whose body is lustrous as the lightning; of whom there is neither beginning, nor middle, nor end; whose infinite majesty is a mystery even to the Veda; cause of the birth, continuance, and ultimate destruction of all being; enchantress of the universe; delighting in thy own supremacy:

*Dohá* 247.

Among all faithful wives and true women thy name, O mother, holds the first place; thy immeasurable grandeur is more than a thousand Sáradas and Seshnágs could tell.

*Chaupái.*

The four-fold rewards of life are easy of attainment by thy servants, O granter of boons, beloved of Tripurári; and all, O goddess, who adore thy lotus feet, are made happy, whether they be gods, or men, or saints. Thou knowest well my heart's desire, for

in the heart of man thou ever dwellest; there is no need that I declare it aloud to thee." So saying, Síta embraced her feet. Bhawáni was moved by her humility and devotion; the image smiled and a garland dropt. Reverently Síta clasped to her bosom the divine gift, and Gauri herself with a heart full of joy thus spoke: "Hearken, Síta; my blessing is effectual; your heart's desire shall be accomplished. Nárad's words are ever truth itself; the bridegroom upon whom your soul is set shall indeed be yours.

*Chhand* 32.

The dark-complexioned youth, upon whose simple beauty your soul is set, shall indeed be yours. The all-merciful in his wisdom knows your loving disposition." On hearing Gauri pronounce this blessing Síta and her companions were glad of heart, and in their delight (says Tulsi) returned again and again to the temple to adore the goddess.

*Soratha* 24.

Finding Gauri so gracious, Síta was more glad of heart than words can tell; and as an auspicious omen, her left side, the seat of good fortune, began to throb.

*Chaupái.*

The two brothers returned to their Guru, inwardly praising Síta's loveliness; and Ráma related to him all that had taken place, being simplicity itself and utterly devoid of all guile. The saint took the flowers and performed his devotions, and then imparted his blessing to the two brothers, saying: "May your desire be accomplished." Ráma and Lakshman gladdened at the words. Then, after taking food, the saintly sage began the recital of sacred legends. When the day was spent, they first asked his permission and then went out to perform their evening duties. The glorious moon was rising in the eastern sky, and its orb reminded them of Síta's lovely face; but afterwards they thus reasoned within themselves: "The queen of night is not to be compared with Síta,

*Doha* 248.

for she was born of the restless Ocean, with poison for a brother, and by day she is dim and obscure; how then can such a poor feeble creature be likened to the lovely Síta?

*Chaupái.*

She waxes and wanes, is the curse of love-sick maids, and is devoured by Ráhu whenever his appointed time comes round; she causes anguish to the *chakwa* and withers the lotus; O moon, thou art full of faults. It is a great sin and highly improper to compare Janak's daughter to thee." Thus finding in the moon a pretext for extolling Síta's beauty, they returned to their Guru, the night being now far advanced, and after bowing themselves at his feet and obtaining his permission they retired to rest. When the night was over Raghunáyak arose and, looking towards his brother, thus began to say: "See, brother, the day has dawned to the delight of the lotus, the *chakwa*, and all mankind." Then said Lakshman in gentle tones and with folded hands, declaring the glory of the Lord:

*Dohá* 249.

"At the dawn of day the lily fades and the brightness of the stars is dimmed, so at the news of your coming all the princes waxed faint;

*Chaupái.*

for bright though they be as the planets, they cannot master the night-black bow. The lotus, the *chákwa*, the bee, and every bird all rejoice in night's defeat; and so, O lord, all your votaries will be glad when the bow is broken. Sunrise is a painless triumph over darkness; the constellations flee away and light flashes upon the world. O Raghuráy, the sun in its rising shows the chiefs in a figure the majesty of their lord; and the dawning glory of your mighty arms is ever manifested in the breaking of the bow.[1] The lord smiled to hear his brother's speech. The all-pure then performed the daily rites of purification and bathed, and, after observance of the prescribed daily ceremonies, presented himself before the Guru and bowed his comely head at his feet. Then Janak summoned Satánand and sent him in haste to Viswamitra; he came and declared his sovereign's message, and also called for the two brothers.

*Dohá* 250.

After reverently saluting Satánand the lord went and sat down by his Guru, who said: Come, my son, Janak has sent for you.

[1] *Or*, and your mighty arms are as it were a pass in the eastern mountain, through which is manifested a succession of broken bows.

*Chaupái.*

You must go and see Síta's nuptials and who is the happy man whom heaven will honour. Said Lakshman: "His will be the glory." The saints were glad to hear this seemly speech, and all with much effusion gave their blessing. Then the gracious god, attended by all the saintly throng, sallied forth to witness the tournament. No sooner had they reached the arena than the news spread all over the city, and every one put away his work and came thronging in, men and women, young and old, and even children in arms. When Janak saw the enormous crowd he gave orders to his practised servitors: Go round at once to all the people and marshal them to their appropriate seats.

*Dohá* 251.

With courteous phrase they respectfully seated them all, both men and women, according to their respective rank, whether noble, burgher, or villain.

*Chaupái.*

Then stept forth the two princes like beauty beautified, graceful and accomplished champions, one dark the other fair, but both charming: resplendent in the assembly of princes like two full moons in a circle of stars. Every spectator seemed to see in them the embodiment of his own ideal: the princes beheld a gallant warrior, as it were the Heroic incarnate; the wicked kings trembled at the sight of the lord, as an incarnation of the Terrible; the demons in princely disguise thought they saw the image of Death; while the citizens regarded the twin brothers as the glory of humanity, the delight of men's eyes.

*Dohá* 252.

The women gazed with rapture, however different their tastes, as though the erotic sentiment had itself been manifested in incomparable form.

*Chaupái.*

By sages the lord was seen in his divine majesty with many faces and hands and feet and eyes and heads. And how did he appear to Janak's family group? like a noble kinsman and friend. The queen,

no less than the king, regarded him with unspeakable love like a dear child; to mystics he shone forth as eternal Truth, the placid radiance of unruffled Quietism; while to the pious the two brothers appeared as their own benignant patron saint. But as for Síta, when she gazed on Ráma, her love and joy were unspeakable; if she could not utter the emotion of her heart, how can any poet declare it? Thus according to the ruling passion of each individual spectator were the Kosala princes seen by each:

*Dohá* 253.

Resplendent in the midst of the royal circle in their contrasted beauty, stealing the eyes of the whole universe.

*Chaupái.*

Both with such facile grace of form that a myriad Loves were all too mean a comparison; with beaming face, that would put to shame the autumnal moon, and irresistibly charming lotus eyes; with a glance so unspeakably winning that it would rob Love of all his pride; with rounded cheeks and ears adorned with pendulous gems; with beautiful chin and lips and sweet voice; with a smile more radiant than the light of the moon, and arched eyebrows and delicate nose, and broad forehead with glittering *tilak*, and clustering locks with which no swarm of bees could vie; with yellow turban on their shapely head, dotted here and there with flower-buds; with exquisite neck, marked with a triple line, enclosing as it were the bliss of the three spheres of creation.

*Dohá* 254.

Adorned with a necklace of elephant pearls[1] and a *tulsi* garland on their breast; with the shoulders of a bull and the gait of a lion, and long arms, very models of strength.

*Chaupái.*

By their side a quiver slung from a yellow brace; with arrows in hand and bow on their left shoulder; with a charming Brahmanical cord, also of yellow tint, and, in short, beautiful from head to foot, beauty all over. Every one who saw them was made happy,

[1] The *kunjara-mani* as it is here named, or more commonly *gajamuktá*, is a pearl supposed to be found in the projections on the forehead of an elephant.

nor could for a minute take his eyes off them. Janak too rejoiced to behold the two brothers. Then went he to the saint and embraced his feet and deferentially related to him all his past history and showed the hermits the place marked out for the games. Wherever the two gallant princes turned, all men's eyes were dazzled ; each saw in Ráma what he himself most admired, nor did any one comprehend in the least the special mystery. The saint told the king the arrangements were perfect, and the king was thereby highly gratified.

*Dohá* 255.

There was one tier of seats bright, spacious, and beautiful above all the rest; and here the Raja seated the saint and the two brothers.

*Chaupái.*

At the sight of the Lord all the chiefs grew sick at heart, like the stars at the rising of the full moon : for they felt inwardly assured that beyond all doubt Ráma would succeed in bending the bow ; or even if he did not break the massy beam, that Síta would still bestow upon him the garland of victory. And so thinking, sir, they turned homewards, abandoning all the glory of victory and pride of strength. There were other kings, blind and insolent fools, who mocked at such words and cried: "To break the bow and win the bride is a difficulty,[1] but unless it be broken how can the bride be won? Should Death himself for once come forth against us, him too would we conquer in battle for Síta's sake." Hearing this, there were other kings who smiled, good, pious, and sensible men, and said :

*Soraṭhá* 25.

"Ráma will certainly marry Síta to the discomfiture of those proud princes; for who can conquer in battle Dasarath's gallant sons?

*Chaupái.*

Why thus scoff and throw away your lives to no purpose; imagined sweets stop no man's hunger. Listen to this my solemn

[1] The word *avagáha* in this line is explained in the glossaries by *atháh*, 'unfathomable,' as if from the root *gáh*, to dive into. Rather, however, it seems to be for *avagráha* (as *kohi* for *krodhi*), meaning an impediment or difficulty.

warning: be inwardly assured that Síta is the mother, and Ráma the father of the universe, and feast your eyes to the full on their beauty. These two brothers, so lovely, so gracious, so full of every excellence, have their home in Sambhu's heart. Why, when you have a sea of ambrosia at hand, should you leave it to run upon your death in pursuit of a mirage? But do ye what seemeth you good; we have to-day reaped our life's reward" So saying the good kings turned to gaze with affection on the picture of incomparable beauty; while in heaven the gods mounted their chariots to behold the spectacle, and showered down flowers, and uttered songs of joy.

*Dohá* 256.

Then seeing the fitness of the time, Janak sent and summoned Síta; and obediently she came, with all her lovely and accomplished attendants.

*Chaupái.*

Her beauty is not to be told: seeing that she is the mother of the world, the perfection of all grace and goodness, every comparison seems to me unworthy of her, and appropriate only to mortal woman. In describing Síta, to what can she be likened, or what can the poet name that will not rather do her dishonour? If I should liken her to other women, where is there on earth any nymph so loveable? or, if I look to the denizens of heaven, Sarasvati is a chatterer; Bhaváni has only half a body; Rati is in sore distress on account of her disfleshed lord; and as for Lachhmi, the twin-birth of poison and strong drink, how can Síta be compared to her? Even though the ocean of ambrosia were the Beautiful, and the tortoise Grace, the rope being fascination, and Mount Meru the amorous sentiment, while Love with his own lotus hand played the part of churner;

*Dohá* 257.

Even then, though Lachhmi, the source of all beauty and bliss, had thus been born, still the poet would shrink from saying that she could be compared to Síta.

*Chaupái.*

She came, and with her her attendant maids, singing sweet-voiced songs; the mother of creation, of incomparable beauty; her

delicate frame veiled in fair white robe, and with a profusion of brilliant and tasteful ornaments, with which her maidens had bedecked her every limb. When she set her foot within the lists, all beholders, men and women alike, were fascinated by her charms ; the gods in their delight sounded their kettledrums, and rained down flowers midst the singing of the *apsarasas*. The wreath of victory sparkled in her hands as she casts a hurried glance on the assembled kings, with anxious heart looking for Ráma. Not a king but was love-smitten. But by the saint sat the two brothers, and on them she fell with her greedy eyes as upon a rich treasure.

*Dohá* 258.

Shrinking into herself from awe of the reverend fathers and at the sight of the vast assemblage, she turned her eyes upon her attendants, though at the same time she drew all Ráma into her soul.

*Chaupái.*

Not a man or woman, who beheld the beauty of Ráma and the loveliness of Síta, could close his eyes for a second ; but all thought with dismay of the king's vow, and in their heart made supplication to Brahma : "O God, quickly remove Janak's obstinacy and make him right-minded as myself. Let the king have no hesitation about breaking his vow and giving Síta in marriage to Ráma ; the world will approve, and we all shall be pleased ; but obstinacy, if persisted in, will at the last be as a consuming fire in his bosom." All were absorbed in the same ardent desire, saying : The dark youth is the match for Síta. Then Janak summoned the heralds, who as they came proclaimed his state and dignity, and bade them go and declare his vow. They went, but in their heart was little joy.

*Dohá* 259.

The heralds cried aloud : "Hearken, all ye princes ; we announce to you our sovereign's vow, and with upraised hands call heaven to witness it.

*Chaupái.*

Though your mighty arms be as the moon, yet Siva's famous bow is as terrible and unyielding as Ráhu. When Rávan and

Bánásur saw it—albeit sturdy champions—they left it and went their way. Here is now the great god's massy beam, and whoever in this royal assembly shall to-day bend it shall be renowned in heaven and earth and hell, and at once without hesitation shall receive in marriage the hand of the king's daughter." When they heard the vow, all the kings were full of eagerness—insolent warriors, savage of soul,—and girding up their loins they rose in haste, bowing their heads, ere they commenced, before their patron god. With flushed face and many a close look, they essay the divine bow ; but though they put forth all their strength in a thousand different ways, they cannot move it. Those, indeed, who had any sense at all did not go near it.

*Dohá* 260.

After straining at the bow, those foolish kings, without being able to stir it, they retire in confusion, as though it had gathered strength by in turn absorbing the force of each successive warrior.

*Chaupái.*

Next ten thousand kings all at once attempted to raise it, but it was not to be moved, and yielded as little as a virtuous wife at the words of a gallant. All the princes appeared as ridiculous as a hermit who has no religion. Their mighty glory and renown and heroism were utterly worsted by the bow, and with much confusion of face and sadness of heart they went and took again each his own place in the assembly. When Janak saw the kings thus dismayed he cried aloud as it were in anger : "Hearing the vow that I had made, many kings have come from diverse realms, with gods and demons in human form, stalwart heroes, staunch in fight.

*Dohá* 261.

A lovely bride, a grand triumph and splendid renown are the prize, but God it seems has not created the man who can break the bow and win it.

*Chaupái.*

Tell me now who was dissatisfied with the guerdon, or refused to try his strength on Siva's bow ; but let alone lifting and breaking,

sirs, there was not one of you who could stir it even a grain's breadth from the ground. Now let no proud warrior wax wroth if I assert there is not a man left on earth. Give up all hope, and turn your faces homewards: it is God's will that Síta is not to be married. If I break my vow, all my religious merit is gone; the girl must remain a maid; what can I do? Had I known, sirs, that there were no men in the world, I would not have made myself a laughing-stock by recording such a vow." Every man and woman who heard Janak's words and looked at Jánaki were sad; but Lakshman was furious: his eyes flashed, his lips quivered, and his brows were knit.

*Dohá* 262.

But for fear of his brother he could not speak, though the taunt pierced his heart like an arrow. Yet at last, bowing his head at Ráma's lotus feet, he thus spoke in dignified tones:

*Chaupái.*

"May there never be repeated in any assembly, where even the lowest of the family of Raghu is present, such a scandalous speech as that now uttered by Janak in the presence of the greatest of the clan. Hearken, thou sun of the lotus-like solar race; I state the simple truth, without any vain boasting; if only I have thy permission, I will lift the round world with as much ease as a marble, and will break it in pieces like an ill-baked potter's vessel, and tear up Mount Meru like a pot-herb. Before thy infinite majesty, O my lord god, what is this wretched old bow? Only give me an order, and see what an exhibition I will make. I will take up the bow as though it were a lotus stalk, and will run a hundred leagues with it to convince you.

*Dohá* 263.

Inspired by thy presence, my lord, I will snap it like the stick of an umbrella; or if I fail, I swear by thy holy feet never to take bow in hand again."

*Chaupái.*

As Lakshman thus spoke in his wrath, earth shook and its elephant supporters tottered; the whole assembly and all the kings were struck with terror; Síta was glad of heart and Janak was

ashamed ; while the saint and Ráma and all the hermits were enraptured and quivered all over with excitement. Then Ráma with a sign checked Lakshman, and lovingly made him sit beside him, while Viswamitra, perceiving the fitness of the time, spoke in gentle and affectionate tones : "Up, Ráma ; break this bow of Siva's and relieve Janak, my son, of his affliction." On hearing the guru's words, he bowed his head at his feet, and without joy or sorrow in his soul rose and stood upright in all his native grace, lordly in gait as a young lion.

*Dohá* 264.

As Raghubar ascended the stage, like the sun climbing the mountains of the east, the hearts of the saints expanded like the lotus, and their eyes were glad as bees at the return of day.

*Chaupái.*

The dark hopes of the kings vanished like the night, and like the serried stars their vaunts waxed feeble: the arrogant shrivelled up like the lilies, and the false slunk away like the owls : saints and gods, like the *chakwa*, were relieved of their distress and rained down flowers in token of homage. After affectionately reverencing the guru's feet and asking permission of the holy fathers, the lord of all creation quickly stepped forth with the tread of a majestic elephant when inflamed with love. As he moved, every man and woman in the city quivered all over their body with delight, worshipping the spirits of their ancestors and the gods, and recalling their own past good deeds, saying: "If my virtuous acts be of any avail, O father Ganes, may Ráma snap the bow as it were a lotus-stalk."

*Dohá* 265.

After lovingly gazing upon Ráma, Síta's mother bid her attendants draw near, and thus spoke with affectionate anxiety:

*Chaupái.*

"Girls, every one is bent on seeing the show, and as for saying what would be for my good, there is no one who will tell the king plainly: These are two mere boys; this excessive obstinacy of yours is wrong; Rávan and Bánásur could not touch the bow,

and the kings with all their pride were conquered by it; how then give it into the hands of these boy-princes? As well might a cygnet carry off Mount Meru. All the king's good sense is clean gone: Ah, girls, god's ways are inscrutable." A sharp-witted maiden gently answered: "O queen, the great are never to be lightly regarded. Look at the meanness of Agastya and the boundlessness of ocean; yet he drained it dry, and his fame has spread through the world. Again, the orb of the sun is small to look at, but at its rising darkness is expelled from heaven and earth and hell.

*Dohá* 266.

A charm is a very little thing, yet it overpowers Brahma and Vishnu and Mahádev and all the gods: and a mere goad governs the mightiest and most furious elephant.

*Chaupái.*

Love too, though his bow and arrow are but of flowers, has brought the whole world under subjection. Fear not then, lady, but hearken to me: Ráma will assuredly break the bow." She took heart at these words of her attendant; her despondency ceased, and her desire was enlarged. Then Síta, with her eyes fixed on Ráma, implored with anxious heart each god in turn, praying to them in her inward soul: "Be gracious to me, O Mahádev and Bhawáni, and reward my service by kindly lightening the weight of the bow. O divine Ganes, granter of boons, it is with a view to to-day that I have done you service. Hearken to my oft-repeated supplication and reduce the weight of the bow to a mere trifle."

*Dohá* 267.

Oft glancing at Raghubir's form and taking courage from her heavenward prayers, her eyes were filled with tears of love and her whole body was in a tremor.

*Chaupái.*

With fixed gaze she devoured his beauty, and then as she remembered her father's vow, her soul was troubled: Alas, my father, for your cruel resolve, made without any regard to good or evil consequences; not a minister but was afraid to give advice—the more the pity—in the great conclave of counsellors. Here is a

bow as firm as adamant, and here a little dark-hued prince of tender frame. O God, how can I maintain my faith? is it possible for a delicate *siris*-flower to transpierce a diamond? The judgment of the whole assembly has gone astray; now, O bow of Sambhu, thou art the only hope left me; impart thy own heaviness to the crowd, and grow light thyself at once at the sight of Ráma." So great was the agitation of Síta's soul that an instant of time passed as slowly as an age.

*Dohá* 268.

As she looks, now at the Lord, and now at the ground, her tremulous eyes so glisten as it were Love's two fish disporting themselves in the orb of the moon.

*Chaupái.*

In her lotus mouth her bee-like voice lies bound; for modesty, like night, allows it not. In the corner of her eye stood a tear-drop, like a miser's buried hoard. Abashed by the consciousness of extreme excitement, she yet summoned up courage and confidence: "If there is any truth in me at all, and I am really enamoured of Raghupati's lotus feet, then the Lord God, who knoweth all men's hearts, will make me Ráma's handmaid; for wherever there is true affection of soul to soul, union will follow beyond a doubt." With her eyes fixed upon the lord she recorded this loving vow: and he the most merciful comprehended it all. After looking at Síta he cast a glance at the bow, as Garur might glance at a poor little snake.

*Dohá* 269.

When Lakshman perceived that the glory of his race had his eye fixed upon the bow, he thrilled with emotion and, striking the earth with his foot, cried thus aloud:

*Chaupái.*

"Ye elephant warders, ye tortoise, serpent, and boar, hold fast the earth with a will that it shake not, for Ráma is about to break the great bow; hearken to my order and be ready." When Ráma drew near to the bow, the people all supplicated the gods by their past good deeds. The doubts and errors of the crowd, the arrogance of

the foolish kings, the proud pretensions of Parasurám, the terror of all the gods and saints, the distress of Síta, the regrets of Janak, the burning anguish of the queens, were all heaped together on the bow as on a raft, while Ráma's strength of arm was the boundless ocean that had to be crossed, and with no helmsman to essay it.

*Dohá* 270.

Ráma first looked at the crowd, who all stood dumb and still as statues; then the gracious lord turned from them to Síta and perceived her yet deeper concern;

*Chaupái.*

Perceived her to be so terribly agitated that a moment of time seemed an age in passing. If a man die of thirst for want of water, when he is once dead, of what use to him is a lake of nectar? What good is the rain when the crop is dead? or what avails regret when a chance has once been lost? Thinking thus to himself as he gazed at Jánaki, the lord was enraptured at the sight of her singular devotion, and after making a reverential obeisance to his *guru* he took up the bow with most superlative ease; as he grasped it in his hand, it gleamed like a flash of lightning; and again as he bent it, it seemed like the vault of heaven. Though all stood looking on, before any one could see he had lifted it from the ground and raised it aloft and drawn it tight, and in a moment broken it in halves: the awful crash re-echoed through the world.

*Chhand* 33.

So awful a crash re-echoed through the world that the horses of the Sun started from their course, the elephants of the four quarters groaned, earth shook, the great serpent, the boar, and the tortoise tottered. Gods, demons, and saints put their hands to their ears and all began anxiously to consider the cause; but when they learnt that Ráma had broken the bow, they uttered shouts of Victory.

*Soraṭhá* 26.

All the deluded crowd who had gone on board 'the Siva's bow' were drowned in the waves of Ráma's might.

*Chaupái.*

The lord tossed upon the ground the two broken pieces of the bow, and at the sight the multitude rejoiced. Viswamitra's love,

like the clear unfathomed depth of ocean, swelled to the highest tide of ecstasy under the full-moon influence of Ráma's presence. There was a jubilant noise of music in the sky; the heavenly nymphs danced and sang; Brahma and all the gods and deified saints and sages praised and blessed the hero, and rained down wreaths of many-coloured flowers; the *kinnars* sung melodious strains; and the shout of Victory, Victory re-echoed throughout the world. The noise that followed the breaking of the bow defies description. Everywhere the people in their joy kept saying: Ráma has broken the great bow.

*Dohá* 271.

Bards, minstrels, and rhapsodists raise their loud-voiced pæans, and all the people lavish offerings of horses, elephants, money, jewels, and raiment.

*Chaupái.*

There was a clash of cymbals, tabors, conches, clarions, sackbuts, drums, kettledrums, and all kinds of music; and in every place were choirs of women singing auspicious strains. The queen with her attendants was as glad as a parched rice-field at a fall of rain; Janak was as pleased and free of care as a tired swimmer on reaching a shallow; the kings were as confounded at the breaking of the bow as a lamp is dimmed at dawn of day; but Sita's gladness can only be compared to that of the *chátaki*[1] on finding a rain-drop in October; while Lakshman fixed his eyes on Ráma as the *chakor* on the moon. Then Satánand gave the word and Síta advanced to Ráma,

*Dohá* 272.

Graceful in motion as a swan, and of infinite beauty in every limb, and with her her fair and sprightly companions who raise the glad marriage song.

*Chaupái.*

Resplendent in their midst as the queen of love among the loves, she holds in her lotus hand the fair wreath of victory, enriched as

[1] The *chátaki* (Cuculus melanoleucos) is fabled never to drink, except it be such drops of rain as fall in the month of October, when the sun is in the same longitude as Arcturus (*Swáti*), a time of the year when a shower is a very rare occurrence. The same precious drops, if they fall into the sea, are transmuted into pearls, a belief to which allusion is made in page 10.

it were with the spoils of a world-wide triumph. With modest air, but rapture in her soul, her interior devotion was withdrawn from sight. As she drew near and beheld Ráma's beauty, she stood motionless like a figure on the wall, till a watchful attendant roused her, saying: "Invest him with the ennobling wreath." At the word she raised the wreath with both her hands, but was too much overcome by emotion to drop it; till as the lotus, flower and stalk, shrinks at the moonlight, so her hand and arm drooped in the glory of his moon-like face. At the sight of his beauty her handmaids break into song, while Síta let fall the wreath upon his breast.

*Soratha* 27.

When the gods saw the wreath resting on his breast they showered down flowers; and the kings all shrunk into nothing, like lilies at the rising of the sun.

*Chaupái.*

Both in the city and in the heaven there were sounds of music; the bad were saddened, and the good were glad. Gods, Kinnars, men, serpents, and saints uttered blessings and shouts of victory. The heavenly nymphs danced and sung, and flowers fell in constant showers. In every place were Bráhmans muttering Vedic texts, and rhapsodists reciting lays of praise. Earth, hell, and heaven were pervaded with the glad news: Ráma has broken the bow and will wed Síta. The men and women of the city light votive torches, and, regardless of their substance, scatter gifts in profusion. Síta by Ráma's side was as resplendent as if Beauty and Love had met together. Her companions whisper: Embrace your lord's feet; but in excess of fear she dares not touch them.

*Dohá* 273.

She touches them not with her hands, remembering the fate of Gautama's wife; and Ráma smiled inwardly at this proof of her supernatural devotion.

*Chaupái.*

Then, as they looked on Síta, the kings were inflamed with desire, and waxed wroth of soul—frantic, degenerate fools—and sprung up—the wretches—and donned their armour and began a

general chorus of abuse: "Come, now, let us carry off Síta and overthrow and bind fast these two princes; though he has broken the bow, he has not yet gained his end; for who shall marry Síta while we still live? If the king give them any assistance, we will conquer him in battle as well as the two brothers." When the good kings heard these words, they answered, and put the whole assembly to shame: "The glory of your might and the greatness of your strength were disgraced for ever at the breaking of the bow. Is that the might of which ye now boast, or have ye since acquired something new? Was it not thus that ye reckoned afore, when God so blackened your faces?

*Dohá* 274.

Cease from envy and arrogance and folly; feast your eyes upon Ráma; and be not like a moth in the fierce flame of Lakshman's wrath.

*Chaupái.*

Like a crow, who would rob the king of the birds[1] of an offering, or a rat who would spoil a lion; as a man who is passionate without cause, and yet wishes for peace of mind; as a reviler of Siva who wishes for happiness and prosperity; as a greedy and covetous man who wishes for fair fame, and as a gallant who would have no scandal; as an enemy of God who wishes to be saved; such is your desire, O ye kings." When Síta heard the tumult she was afraid, and with her companions went away to the queen, while Ráma composedly joined the *guru*, talking to himself of Síta's affection. Síta and the queens were much distrest, saying: "What is it God would have now?" And at the sound of the voices of the kings they looked helplessly up and down. For fear of Ráma, Lakshman could not speak.

*Dohá* 275.

With fiery eyes and knitted brows he cast a furious look at the kings, like a lion's whelp watching to spring on a herd of wild elephants.

[1]The king of the birds—Garur—is here called *Vainateya*, that is to say, the son of Vinatá.

*Chaupái.*

Seeing the tumult, the people were all distrest and joined in reproaching the kings. Then it was that the sun of the lotus race of Bhrigu (Parasurám) arrived, for he had heard of the breaking of the bow. At the sight of him the kings all cowered down, as a partridge shrinking beneath the swoop of a hawk. Of pallid hue, and well bestreaked with ashes; with the three horizontal lines sacred to Siva conspicuous on his broad forehead; with the hair on his head bound in a knot, and his moon-like face flushed with the furnace fire of smouldering wrath; with frowning brows and eyes inflamed with passion; he casts a quick and furious glance around. With bull-like shoulders and mighty chest and arms; with fair sacrificial cord and string of beads and deer-skin; with an anchorite's dress about his loins and two quivers slung by his side; with bow and arrows in hand, and his sharp axe upon his shoulder;

*Dohá* 276.

In his saintly attire and savage mien a figure beyond description, as though the Heroic had taken the form of a hermit: so he drew near to the kings.

*Chaupái.*

When they beheld his ghastly attire they all rose in consternation, each mentioning his own and his father's name, and fell prostrate on the ground before him; and even those on whom he cast a kindly glance thought their life had come to an end. Then came Janak and bowed his head, and called for Síta also to pay him homage. He bestowed upon her his blessing, and her glad companions escorted her back to her own apartments. Next came Viswamitra to salute him, and placed the two boys at his feet, saying: "These are Ráma and Lakshman, Dasarath's sons." He admired the well-matched pair and blessed them, with his eyes long fixed upon Ráma's incomparable beauty, which would humble the pride even of Love himself.

*Dohá* 277.

Then he turned and said to Videha: "Why all this crowd?" Asking as though he did not know, while his whole body was bursting with passion.

*Chaupái.*

Janak told him the whole history and the reason why the kings had assembled. After hearing his reply he again looked away and spied the fragments of the bow lying on the ground. In a mighty passion he cried in furious tones: "Tell me now, Janak, you fool, who has broken the bow? Show him to me at once, or this very day I will overthrow the whole of your dominion." In his excess of fear the king could give no answer: the wicked suitors were glad of heart; gods, saints, serpents, and all the people of the city were full of anxiety and profound alarm; Síta's mother was lamenting: "God has now undone all that had just been done so well;" and Síta when she heard of Bhrigupati's character felt half a minute pass like an age.

*Dohá* 278.

Seeing the people's consternation and Jánaki's anxiety, the imperturbable Raghubír thus spoke and said:

*Chaupái.*

"My Lord, the bow has probably got broken by some one of your servants. What are your orders? Why not tell me?" At this the furious saint was yet more incensed and cried: "A servant is one who does service, but he who does the deeds of an enemy must be fought. Hearken, Ráma; whoever it was who broke Siva's bow is as much my enemy as was Sahasrabáhu. Separate him from among the assembly, or else every one of these kings shall be killed." When Lakshman heard the saint's words, he smiled and said to him in a tone of contempt: "O sir, I have broken many a bow as a child, and you were never before thus angry; why were you so fond of this bow in particular?" Parasurám replied in a fury:

*Dohá* 279.

"Ah! death-doomed prince, is there no stopping your tongue? Would you compare to a common bow the great bow of Siva, that is famous throughout the world?"

*Chaupái.*

Said Lakshman with a smile: "I thought, holy sir, that all bows were alike. What gain or what loss can there be in the breaking

of a worn-out bow ? Ráma by mistake took it for a new one, and directly he touched it, it snapped in two : but it was no fault of his ; why then, reverend sir, be so angry for no cause?" He answered, with a glance at his axe : "Fool, have you never heard of my temper? I do not slay you because, as I say, you are but a child. You in your folly take me for a mere recluse ; and from my childhood an ascetic I am, but a fiery one, and the terror of the whole Kshatriya race, as is known throughout the world. By the might of my arm I have made earth kingless, and time after time have bestowed her upon the Bráhmans. See here, you king's son, the axe with which I lopped off Sahasrabáhu's thousand arms.

*Dohá* 280.

Do not bring distress upon your father and mother: my cruel axe has ripped up even unborn infants in the womb."

*Chaupái.*

Lakshman replied with a quiet smile: "Ah! holy sir, you think yourself a great warrior indeed, and keep brandishing your axe before me as if with a mere puff of breath you could blow away a mountain. But I am not a *kumhar* blossom that drops as soon as it sees a finger raised against it. When I perceived your axe and quiver and arrows, I spoke a little haughtily; but now that I see by your Brahmanical thread that you are of Bhrigu's line, say what you like, and I will bear it patiently. In my family there is no waging battle against gods, or Bráhmans, or devotees, or cows; for to kill them is a crime, and to be overcome by them a disgrace ; and therefore I must throw myself at your feet even though you strike me. Your curse is as awful as a million thunderbolts, and your axe and bow and arrows are unnecessary.

*Dohá* 281.

Pardon me, great and reverend sage, for anything improper that I said when I first saw you." The glory of Bhrigu's race cried furiously in his deep-toned voice :

*Chaupái.*

"Hearken, son of Kusika; this child is demented; a perverse and death-doomed destroyer of his own house ; a dark spot on the

moon-like brightness of the solar race; utterly ungovernable, senseless and reckless. Another moment and he shall be a mouthful in the jaws of death, and I loudly protest it is no fault of mine. Take him away if you would save him, and teach him my glory and might and the fierceness of my temper." Said Lakshman: "So long as you live, father, who else can tell your fame so well? With your own mouth you have many times and in many ways declared your own doings. If you are not yet satisfied, tell them over again, and do not distress yourself beyond endurance by putting any restraint upon your passion. But if you are really a resolute and dauntless warrior, there is no honour to be got by abuse.

*Dohá* 282.

Heroes perform valiant deeds in fight, but do not themselves publish them: cowards finding a foe before them in the battle, talk very large,

*Chaupái.*

as you now would terrify me with your repeated cries of 'Death.'" On hearing Lakshman's rude speech he closed his hand upon his terrible axe: "After this let no man blame me; this sharp-tongued boy deserves his death. I have spared him long on account of his being a child; but now of a truth he is as good as dead." Said Viswamitra: "Pardon his offence; the wise regard not the faults or merits of children." "I have axe in hand and am pitiless in my wrath; he is moreover guilty, and has injured my *guru*. Yet though this be my answer, I will still spare his life, though solely out of regard for you, Viswamitra. But for you, I had cut him in pieces with my terrible axe, and thus easily have paid my *guru* his due."

*Dohá* 283.

Said the son of Gádhi, smiling to himself: "Everything looks green to the saint's eyes;[1] though Ráma has to-day broken the bow as though it were a stick of sugarcane, still he has not the sense to understand."

[1]The allusion is to a popular saying 'A man who loses his eyesight in the month of Sáwan thinks everything is always green.' *Hariari*, 'green,' may also be taken as two words *Hari* and *ari*, 'an enemy to Vishnu;' a light in which it would be the height of folly for Parasurám to regard Ráma, since Ráma was himself an incarnation of Vishnu, as also was Parasurám. The double interpretation was probably intended by the poet.

*Chaupái.*

Said Lakshman: "Is there any one, Father, ignorant of your humour? it is notorious throughout the world. You have well paid the debt you owed to your father and mother,[1] but it was a great distress to you to be still in debt to your guru. You have now transferred the account to me, but the interest by lapse of time has become very heavy. So you must bring forward the original creditor, and then, sir, I will at once open my purse." When he heard these bitter words he grasped his axe, and all the people cried: Alack, alack. "O Bhrigu-bar, you still keep showing me your axe, but, regicide as you are, I only spare you on account of your being a Bráhman. You have never yet met a real staunch fighting man, and, most reverend sir, you are a great man only in your own house." They all cried out: How very wrong; and Ráma gave Lakshman a sign to be quiet.

*Dohá* 284.

Lakshman's words were like oil on the fire of Bhrigupati's wrath; till, seeing the flame increase, Ráma quenched it with the flood of admonition:

*Chaupái.*

"My lord, have compassion on a child, and wreak not your wrath on such an unweaned infant: if he had any idea of your glorious power, how could he be so foolish as to put himself on an equality with you? When a child commits any naughtiness, its *guru* and father and mother are in raptures at it. Have pity then on the boy, who is really one of your clients; for thus it becometh a saint, so patient and wise as you are." On hearing Ráma's words he cooled down a little; but again Lakshman said something with a smile, and seeing him smile he flushed all over with rage: "Ráma, your brother is too wicked; though fair in outward hue, he is black at heart, and it is not mother's milk but poison that his lips have sucked. Perverse by nature, he neither takes after you, nor regards me."

[1]Every Hindú is said to be in debt by nature to three persons, *viz.*, his father, his mother, and his *guru*. The two first debts had been paid by Parasurám in a notable fashion; for he had restored his mother Renuká to life again after he had first cut off her head in obedience to his father Jamad-agni's order; and again when his father had been slain by Sahasra-báhu, he avenged him by the slaughter of the whole Kshatriya race. It now remained for him to satisfy his *guru*, Mahádev, for the outrage Ráma had done him in breaking his bow.

*Dohá* 285.

Said Lakshman with a smile: "Hearken, O saint; passion is the root of sin; those who are under its influence do wrong and set themselves against the world.

*Chaupái.*

I am one of your followers, reverend sir; put away your wrath and show mercy upon me. Anger will not mend the broken bow; pray sit down, you must be tired of standing. If you were so very fond of it, devise a plan for getting it mended, and call in some skilful workman." Janak was frightened at Lakshman's words: Be quiet; such frowardness is not right. The citizens all shook and trembled: to think so small a boy could be so naughty. As Bhrigupati heard his fearless words, his whole body was on fire with rage, and he became quite powerless and in a tone of entreaty cried to Ráma: "See if you can manage this little brother of yours; so fair without and foul within, he resembles a golden jar full of poison."

*Dohá* 286.

At this Lakshman smiled, but Ráma gave him a look of reproof and submissively approached the *guru*, putting away all frowardness of speech.

*Chaupái.*

Clasping his two hands together and speaking in most modest, gentle, and placid tones, he said: "Hearken, my lord; you were born a sage; pay no heed then to the words of a child. Boys are like gnats: no wise man will ever trouble himself about them. Nor is it he who has done the mischief; I, my lord, am the offender. Be pleased, your Reverence, to visit everything on me, your servant, whether it be favour or anger, or death or bonds. Tell me quickly the means, O king of saints, by which your passion may be assuaged." Said the saint:" "O Ráma, how can my passion be assuaged? Your brother has to-day set me at nought, and yet I have not struck off his head with my axe; what then have I done in anger?

*Dohá* 287.

When they heard of the fierce doings of my axe, the proudest queens were seized with untimely pains of labour; my axe is still here, and yet I see this princeling, my enemy, alive.

*Chaupái.*

My hand moves not, though passion consumes my breast: my regicide axe has become blunted. Fate is against me; my nature is changed; for when was I ever pitiful before? To-day by heaven's will I have suffered intolerable pain." On hearing this, the son of Sumitrá smiled and bowed his head: "Your pity is like the wind, and the words you speak scatter blossoms. If a saint's body is consumed even by pity, how can god preserve him when he is angry?" "See now, Janak; keep this child away; he is bent in his folly on visiting the realms of death. Why do you not at once take him out of my sight, this little prince, so small to look at, and yet so wicked?" Lakshman laughed and said to the saint: Shut your eyes and you will see nothing.

*Dohá* 288.

Then said Parasurám in tones of fury to Ráma: "Wretch, after breaking Siva's bow do you now teach me?

*Chaupái.*

It is at your suggestion that your brother utters these sarcasms, and your humility and folded hands are a mockery. Give me my satisfaction in combat, or forswear your name of Ráma. You enemy of Siva, have done with your tricks and meet me in battle, or I will slay both you and your brother too." Flushed with passion he raised his axe on high, but Ráma only smiled and bowed: "Though the fault is Lakshman's, your wrath is against me; it is sometimes a great mistake to be good and upright; for every one is afraid of the crooked, in the same way as Ráhu does not attack the crescent moon. Cease, O great saint, from your wrath, said Ráma. Your axe is in your hand and my head is in front of you; do anything, sir, that will tend to pacify you, for I am your servant.

*Dohá* 289.

And how can a servant fight his master? O holy Bráhman, stop your wrath; if the boy said anything after looking at your dress he meant no harm.

*Chaupái.*

For seeing you equipt with axe and bow and arrows, the child took you for a knight and challenged you; for though he knew your

name, he did not recognize your person, and answered you according to your lineage. If you had come as a Religious, he would have put the dust of your Holiness's feet upon his head. Forgive the mistake of one who did not know you; a Bráhman's heart should be all mercy. What equality, my lord, can there be between you and me? We are as far apart as head and feet. I am called simply Ráma. You have the long name of 'Ráma of the axe.' I have only one string to my bow, while you have all the holy nine.[1] In every way I am your inferior; as a Bráhman, pardon my offence."

*Dohá* 290.

Again and again did Ráma entreat his namesake, addressing him by his titles of 'Saint' and 'Holy Bráhman,' till Bhrigupati exclaimed in his rage: "You are as perverse as your brother.

*Chaupái.*

You persist in taking me for a Bráhman; I will tell you now what kind of a Bráhman I am. My bow is my sacrificial ladle, my arrow the oblation, and my wrath the blazing fire; armies fully equipt with horses and chariots and elephants and footmen are the fuel, and mighty kings are the victims for oblation, whom I have cut in pieces with this axe; thus have I celebrated countless sacrifices of war all over the world. To you my glory is unknown, and you address me contemptuously, taking me for a mere Bráhman. Now that you have broken the bow, your pride has increased enormously, and you put yourself forward in your arrogance as a universal conqueror." Said Ráma: "O saint, think before you speak; your anger is excessive, my fault is a trifling one. The old bow broke at a touch. What reason have I to be proud?

*Dohá* 291.

Hear the truth, O Bhrigunáth; you say I set you at nought when I treat you with the respect due to a Bráhman; but is there any warrior to whom I would bow my head in fear?

*Chaupái.*

Any god, demon, king, or warrior, whether my equal in strength or my superior, who will challenge me to combat, him would I gladly

[1] *Gun*, which is the name for a bow-string, means also virtue; and the cardinal virtues are said to be nine in number, though the list is a variable one.

meet, or even Death himself. For one who is born of warrior caste and yet shirks the battle is a disgrace to his lineage and a contemptible wretch. I state what is only a characteristic of my race, and make no idle boast; there is not a descendant of Raghu who would fear to meet in battle even Death himself; but so great is the power of Brahmanical descent that he fears you who fears nought else." On hearing this calm and profound speech of Ráma's, the eyes of the soul of the axe-bearer were opened: "O Ráma, take and draw this bow of Vishnu's and let my doubts be ended." As he gave it, the bow strung itself of its own accord; then was Parasurám amazed at heart.

*Dohá* 292.

He acknowledged the power of Ráma; his whole frame quivered with excitement; and, his heart bursting with love, he thus spake with clasped hands:

*Chaupái.*

"Glory to the sun of the lotus race of Raghu, to the fire that consumes the serried ranks of the demons; glory to the friend of gods, Bráhmans and kine; glory to the dispeller of the delusions induced by pride, ignorance, and passion; glory to him whose piety, amiability, and compassion are fathomless as ocean; glory to him who is unrivalled in the art of speech, the rewarder of service, the all-beautiful of form, more gracious of person than a myriad Loves. How can I with one tongue declare his praise, who is as it were the divine swan in the hyperboreal lake of Mahádev's soul? In my ignorance I have said much that was unseemly; but pardon me, ye twin brothers, mercy's shrine." Still repeating as he went, Glory, glory, glory to the mighty Ráma, Bhrigupati withdrew to the forest to practise penance. The wicked kings were self-dismayed and trembled, and fled—the cowards—in all directions without a word.

*Dohá* 293.

The gods sounded their kettledrums and rained down flowers on the Lord; and all the people of the city rejoiced, now that the thorn of fear and error had been extracted from their heart.

*Chaupái.*

There was a tumultuous clash of instruments of music and a display of all things pleasant and auspicious. Troops of fair-faced,

bright-eyed maidens joined in song with voices of exquisite melody. Janak's delight was beyond description, as that of a born beggar who has found a treasure; and Sita, relieved of her fears, was as glad as a young partridge at the rising of the moon. The king made obeisance before Viswamitra, saying: It is by my lord's favour that Ráma has broken the bow. These two brothers have given me the victory: tell me now, reverend sir, what it becomes me to do. Said the saint: "Hearken, wise king; the marriage was dependent on the bow, and took effect directly the bow broke; this is well known to every one, whether god, man, or Nága:

*Dohá* 294.

Still, go and perform according to family usage whatever practices are prescribed in the Veda, after consultation with the Bráhmans and elders and your own guru;

*Chaupái.*

and despatch a herald to Avadh to invite king Dasarath." The prince responded gladly: "'Tis well, gracious sir," and sent a messenger to Avadh that very moment. Then he summoned all the burghers, who came, every one of them, and humbly bowing before him received the order: "Decorate all the markets and streets and temples and shrines in all four quarters of the city." They returned in joy, each to his own house. Then he called up his own servants and instructed them: "Have all kinds of pavilions made and erected." They obeyed in all gladness and sent word to the different artificers who were skilful in the construction of canopies and triumphal arches; and they, after invoking Brahma, set to work and made pillars of gold in the shape of plantain trees,

*Dohá* 295.

with leaves and fruit of emeralds, and ruby flowers; such a gorgeous show that the Creator was quite disconcerted at the sight—

*Chaupái.*

The rods all encrusted with emeralds, and so like in form and colour[1] that no one could tell them from real, with betel leaves

[1]Another reading, instead of *sa-ras, sa-barna*, is *saral sa-parva*, 'straight and knotted.'

fashioned in gold so bright and glistening that no one could look at them. Then they worked up the leaves into wreaths, with strings of beautiful pearls inserted here and there, and after much cutting and graving and inlaying made lotuses of mosaic with rubies, emeralds, diamonds, and turquoises. Bees too they made and birds of varied plumage, which buzzed and whistled in the rustling breeze; and on the pillars they sculptured figures of the gods, all standing erect with things of good omen in their hands. Squares were drawn on the ground and filled in with diverse devices made of elephant pearls[1] of exquisite beauty.

*Dohá* 296.

There were also made most lovely mango-boughs of graven sapphires with blossoms of gold, while clusters of emerald fruit glistened on silken cords.

*Chaupái.*

Next they made charming festoons as it were Love's own nooses, and many golden vases with silken flags and banners and waving fans, and elegant lamps all studded with gems. It is impossible to describe the various pavilions, and in particular the one intended for the royal bride; what poet would have the hardihood to attempt its description? while the canopy for Ráma, the bridegroom, the centre of all beauty and perfection, flashed its splendour through all three worlds. In every house throughout the city there was the same splendour as in Janak's palace; any one who then saw Tirhut thought there was nothing in the fourteen spheres[2] to compare with it, and the prosperous appearance of the very meanest house was enough to fascinate even the king of heaven.

*Dohá* 297.

For the splendour of the city inhabited by the goddess Lachhmi, in disguise as a woman, was more than even Sárada or Seshnág could tell.

[1]For *sindhur*, 'an elephant,' another reading is *sindur*, 'vermilion;' but this cannot be correct, since the *chauks* or squares, to which reference is here made, are always marked out with some *white* material, ordinarily flour, though in a king's palace strings of pearls might be substituted.

[2]The fourteen spheres are as follows, *viz.*, first, seven above the earth—Bhúr-lok, Bhuvar-lok, Swar-lok, Mahar-lok, Jan-lok, Tap-lok, and Satya-lok; and seven beneath the earth—Atal, Bital, Sutal, Rasátal, Mahátal, Talátal, and Pátál.

*Chaupái.*

When the heralds arrived at Ráma's sacred birthplace they rejoiced to see the beauty of the city. At the royal gate they sent in word, and king Dasarath at once summoned them to his presence. With a profound salutation they delivered the letter, and the king in his joy rose to receive it. As he read it his eyes filled with tears, his body quivered all over, and his heart seemed bursting. With Ráma and Lakshman in his soul, and their dear letter in his hand, he could not utter a word either good or bad. At last, taking courage, he read the letter, and all the court rejoiced to hear the certain news. Now Bharat was playing about, and on hearing the tidings he, nay, the two brothers, came and with the utmost modesty and affection asked: "Father, where has the letter come from?

*Dohá* 298.

Is all well with my two dear brothers? tell me what country they are in." On hearing these loving words the king again read the letter.

*Chaupái.*

On hearing it the two brothers trembled all over with irrepressible joy, and the whole court was charmed to see Bharat's holy devotion. Then the king seated the messengers close by him and said in sweet and winning tones: "Tell me, friend, are the two boys well? Have you really seen them with your own eyes?" "One is dark, the other fair; both are equipt with bow and quiver, and are of tender age, and with them is saint Viswamitra." Said the king again and again in his overpowering love: "You know them, it is clear; tell me now of their state; for from the day that the saint took them away till now I have had no definite news of them. Tell me how Janak knew them." At these fond words the messengers smiled:

*Dohá* 299.

"Hearken, O jewel and crown of kings; there is no man so blest as you, who have for sons Ráma and Lakshman, who are the glory of the whole world.

*Chaupái.*

There is no need to ask your sons who they are; lion-hearted heroes who irradiate the three spheres. Before their glory and

renown the moon is dim and the sun is cold. Why say, my lord, how they were recognized? Does one take a lamp in his hand in order to see the sun? The countless kings at Síta's marriage, great warriors as they were, all shrunk away one after the other; for not one of them could stir Sambhu's bow, but all failed, those mighty princes. The power of the haughtiest champions in the three worlds was crushed by it. Though Bánásur could uproot Mount Meru, even he confessed himself beaten, and retired after pacing around it; and he who in sport uplifted Kailás (*i.e.* Rávan) was worsted in this assembly.

*Dohá* 300.

Then Ráma, the jewel of Raghu's line (hearken, O sovereign lord), snapped the bow with as little effort as an elephant would put forth in breaking the stalk of a lotus.

*Chaupái.*

At these tidings Parasurám came in a fury, and after much brow-beating gave Ráma his own bow to test his strength, then suppliantly withdrew to the woods. Nor is Ráma more conspicuous in his unequalled might than is the all-glorious Lakshman, at sight of whom the kings tremble, as an elephant before a young lion. No one who sees your two sons, sir, can regard anything else on earth." At this eloquent and affectionate speech of the heralds, so loving, grand, and heroic, the king and his court were much moved and began to offer them lavish gifts; but they closed their ears, crying: "Not so, not so;" and all were charmed to see their integrity.

*Dohá* 301.

Then the king rose and went and gave the letter to Vasishta, and after relating all the circumstances to the *guru* sent courteously for the envoys.

*Chaupái.*

After hearing them the saint was highly pleased and said: "To a good man the world is full of happiness. As rivers run into the sea, though it has no greed for them, so joy and prosperity come unasked and of their own accord to a virtuous soul. Strict in the performance of your duties to your *guru*, and to Bráhmans and kine and

gods; and your queen Kausalyá no less devout than yourself; you have no equals for piety in the whole world, either now, or in the past, nor hereafter shall have. Who, O king, can be more blest than you, who have a son like Ráma? nay, four heroic sons, all equally obedient, religious, and amiable. Happy indeed are you for all time. Prepare the marriage procession to sound of music:

*Dohá* 302.

Go quickly." On hearing the saint's commands the king bowed in assent, and hastened to the palace, after assigning quarters to the heralds.

*Chaupái.*

Then he called all the ladies of the seraglio and read aloud to them Janak's letter: all rejoiced greatly at the news. He then told them all the verbal message; and both himself and the queens were as enraptured with delight as is a peacock at the sound of approaching rain. The *guru's* wives in their joy invoked the blessings of heaven, and the queen-mother was completely overwhelmed with ecstasy. They take the dear letter from one another and press it to their bosom to cool as it were their burning heart. Again and again, ere he turned to the door, the king repeated the glory and the exploits both of Ráma and Lakshman, adding: "It is all by the saint's good favour." Then the ladies sent for the Bráhmans and joyfully made them offerings, for which the holy men returned their blessings.

*Soratha* 28.

Next they called together the beggars and lavished every kind of gift upon them: "May the four sons of the Emperor Dasarath live for ever:"

*Chaupái.*

Thus they shouted as they left, attired in raiment of many colours. There was a jubilant clamour of music, and in every house, as the news spread among the people, there were joyous congratulations. The fourteen spheres were fulfilled with delight at the marriage of Raghubír with the daughter of Janak. When they heard the glad tidings, the citizens were enraptured and began decorating the roads and houses and streets; for although Avadh in itself was a charming place, and clean and pure as being Ráma's home,

yet as the natural outcome of its love it garnished and adorned itself still more with festal decorations. Silken flags and banners and graceful *chauries* crested the gay bazar; and at every turn were golden jars and festoons of netted pearls and heaps of turmeric, *dúb* grass, curds, rice, and garlands of flowers.

*Dohá* 303.

Every one decorated his house; the streets were duly watered, and every square was filled in with some tasteful design.

*Chaupái.*

Troops of girls assembled at different places, who had practised all the sixteen kinds of female adornment;[1] brilliant as the lightning, with moon-like face and fawn-like eyes, and beauty enough to rob even Love of his pride; singing auspicious strains with voice so melodious that the cuckoo was put to shame on hearing the sweet sound. How is the king's palace to be described? The pavilion they set up would dazzle the world. Everything beautiful and of fair omen was displayed, and every kind of music was heard. Here were rhapsodists chanting songs of praise; here were Bráhmans muttering Vedic spells; while lovely women carolled joyous songs, ever dwelling on the names of Ráma and Síta. The joy was so great that the palace was too small for it, and it overflowed on all four sides.

*Dohá* 304.

What poet can describe in full the magnificence of the palace of Dasarath, in which Ráma, the glory of highest heaven, had taken birth?

*Chaupái.*

The king next called Bharat: "Go and prepare horses and elephants and chariots and start at once for Raghubír's marriage procession." When they heard this order both brothers were full of

[1]The sixteen *sringár*, or modes of female adornment, are specified in the following rhymes :—

Prathama ang-suchi ek bidhi—Majjan dutiya bakháni,
Amal basan pahirau tritiya—Yávak chári sujáni.
Panchama kes-sanvárivo—Shashtahin máng-sindur,
Bhál-khauri saptama kahat—Ashtam chibuk til pur.
Mehndi kar pad rachan nava—Dasama argaja ang,
Gyárah bhúkhan nag-jatit—Bárah pushp prasang.
Básrág mukh terahi—Chaudah rangivo dánt
Adhar-rág gani panchadasa—Kajjal shodas bhánt.

excitement. Bharat sent for all the chief officers and issued his commands, and they rose in joy and haste to perform them. First they made gorgeous trappings for the horses. Of different colours were the gallant steeds, but all well-proportioned and mettlesome, touching the ground with their feet as lightly as though it were red-hot iron. I cannot tell all the various breeds; they would race the wind and outstrip it. The princes who mounted them were all like Bharat, graceful, beautiful, and gorgeously attired, with bow and arrows in hand, and well-filled quiver at their side:

*Dohá* 305.

Slim, elegant, and lithesome youths, but expert warriors all; and with each knight were two footmen well skilled in sword-play.

*Chaupái.*

Full of high resolve, the warriors staunch in fight sallied forth and halted outside the city, putting their well-trained steeds through all their paces and rejoicing in the clash of tabor and drum. The charioteers had made their cars equally gorgeous with flags and banners and jewelled adornments, with elegant chauries and tinkling bells, so as to outdo in splendour the chariot of the Sun. Innumerable were the black-eared[1] horses which the grooms yoked to these chariots, and all were so beautiful and richly caparisoned that even a saint would be enraptured at the sight; skimming the surface of the water like dry land, nor sinking even hoof-deep, so marvellous their speed. After completing their equipment of armour and weapons the charioteers gave word to their masters,

*Dohá* 306.

who all mounted in turn, and the procession began to form outside the city; all, whatever the object on which they were bent, were met by auspicious omens.

*Chaupái.*

On the magnificent elephants were splendid canopies, wrought in a manner beyond all description. As the mighty elephants moved, the bells clanged like the thunder from the clouds in the grateful month of Sáwan. And other vehicles were there of many

[1]A horse to be fit for sacrifice must have black ears.

kinds; elegant *pálkis* and sedans and coaches, wherein were seated companies of noble Bráhmans, incarnations, as it were, of all the hymns of the Veda. The genealogists and bards and minstrels and rhapsodists were mounted on other cars according to their rank; while mules and camels and oxen of every breed were laden with all sorts of baggage; there were also millions of *kaháŕs* with burdens slung across their shoulders; but who could enumerate such an endless list of things and the crowd of servants, each with his own set of appliances?

*Dohá* 307.

All were glad and fearless of heart, and were quivering with excitement in every limb, saying: "When shall we feast our eyes with the sight of the two heroes, Ráma and Lachhman?"

*Chaupái.*

The elephants' bells clanged with a fearful din; on all sides there was a creaking of wheels and a neighing of horses: the drums would drown a tempest's roar, and no one could hear himself speak nor any one else. At the king's gate was such an enormous crowd that the stone pavement was all trodden into dust. Women mounted on the upper story viewed the sight with festal torches and salvers in their hands, and carolled melodious songs in an ecstasy of joy beyond description. Then Sumanta made ready two chariots and yoked them with steeds that would outrun the horses of the Sun, and brought them in all their beauty before the king—not Sáradá herself could do them justice—the one was for the royal retinue, but the other was still more splendid.

*Dohá* 308.

This the king first caused Vasishta to mount, and then himself ascended with his thoughts fixed upon Hara, his guru, Gauri and Ganes.

*Chaupái.*

By Vasishta's side the king shone forth as Puŕandara beside Vrihaspatí. After performing every ceremony prescribed either by family usage or the Veda, and inspecting whatever had been done, he sallied forth to the blast of the conch-shell, after obtaining the permission of his *guru*, and with his thoughts fixed on Ráma. The

beneficent gods rejoiced to see the procession and rained down flowers. There was a confused uproar, horses neighing, elephants trumpeting, and drums beating both in the sky and on the line of march. Women and goddesses alike broke out in songs of joy, while tuneful clarions played in sweet accord. There was an indescribable clamour of bells, both great and small. The foot soldiers leaped and danced as if challenging attack ; the jesters practised all kinds of buffoonery, provoking laughter with facetious songs.

*Dohá* 309.

Gallant youths make their steeds curvet to the measured beat of tabors and kettledrums, and accomplished dancers note with surprise that they never make a step out of time.

*Chaupái.*

But it is useless attempting to describe the procession. Every omen that occurred was fair and auspicious. On the left side a blue-necked jay was picking up food as if to announce the very highest good fortune ; on a fair field on the right were a crow and a *mangús* in the sight of all ; a grateful breeze breathed soft and cool and fragrant ; a woman was seen with a pitcher and child ; a fox showed himself winding about ; and in front a cow was suckling its calf; a herd of deer came out on the right, an indication of everything good; a Brahmani kite promised all success, also a *syáma* bird perched on a tree to the left; a man was met bearing curds and fish, and two learned Bráhmans with books in their hands.

*Dohá* 310.

Every good and auspicious omen, and every bestower of desired reward, seemed all to have met at once as if to verify themselves.

*Chaupái.*

Every good and auspicious omen was ready at hand for him whose glorious son was the incarnate god, for a bridegroom like Ráma and Sita his bride, and the pious Dasarath and Janak, the two parents. When they heard of the marriage, all the good omens began to dance and say : " Now at last the Creator has really made us to be what our name denotes." In this manner the procession set forth with noise of horses and elephants and beat of drums. When Janak, the glory of the Solar race, heard of its approach, he had all the rivers

bridged, and at different stages had convenient rest-houses erected, which vied in splendour with the city of heaven, and were supplied with everything that one could desire, beds, food, and linen. Ever discovering some new charm, all the travellers forgot their own home.

*Dohá* 311.

When it was known that the procession was close at hand and the beating of the drums was heard, a deputation went out to meet it with elephants and chariots, and foot and horse.

*Chaupái.*

Beautiful golden vases and trays and salvers and costly dishes[1] of every kind, laden with cates as sweet as nectar and of indescribable variety, with much luscious fruit, and, in short, everything of the best, did the king in his gladness send as an offering. Ornaments, wearing apparel, jewels of all kinds, birds, deer, horses, elephants, carriages of every description, well-omened spices, delicious perfumes, these too did the king send, and there was a train of porters with their baskets full of curds and parched rice and other light entremêts. When the deputation saw the wedding guests their soul was full of rapture and their body quivered with excitement; while the guests were no less charmed by the preparations made for their reception and beat their drums.

*Dohá* 312.

For a little they joined their ranks and marched in their joy as one body for the sake of company; like two oceans of bliss that had burst their bounds and come together

*Chaupái.*

The nymphs of heaven rained down flowers and sang, the glad gods beat their drums. The offerings were all set out before the king with an humble and affectionate address. The king graciously accepted them and bestowed them in charity on the poor. Then with religious honours and hymns of praise they conducted him to the guest-chambers. The cloths spread as carpets for king Dasarath to tread upon were so gorgeous that the god of wealth on seeing them could boast no longer. The gods rained down flowers and shouted Victory,

[1]For *bhajan*, 'dishes,' some copies read *bhojan*, 'food,' but incorrectly, as the context shows.

Victory. The apartments assigned were most beautiful and supplied with every kind of comfort. When Síta knew that the procession had arrived in the city she manifested her greatness to a slight extent and with thoughtful heart called up the eight Siddhis, or wonder-working spirits, and sent them to arrange for the king's reception.

*Dohá* 313.

Obedient to her command, they repaired to the reception-hall, taking with them every kind of luxury and comfort and all the joys and delights of heaven.

*Chaupái.*

Each guest on going to see his apartment found it a veritable paradise; no one, however, had an inkling of the mysterious power that had been exerted, but took it all as Janak's doing. Ráma alone recognized the influence of Síta, and rejoiced at this proof of her love. When the two brothers heard of their father's arrival they could not contain themselves for joy, but were too modest to speak to their *guru*, though they longed greatly to see their sire again. Viswamitra perceived their humility, which filled his soul with contentment, and took the two brothers to his bosom with quivering body and eyes bedewed with tears. Then went they to Dasarath's mansion, like thirsting travellers who have spied a pool.

*Dohá* 314.

When the king saw the saint coming with the two boys he rose in joy and advanced to meet them, like one who feels his footing in a deep flood of bliss.

*Chaupái.*

He prostrated himself before the saint, again and again sprinkling on his head the dust of his feet. Viswamitra took him to his bosom and blessed him and enquired after his welfare. Then the two brothers prostrate themselves. The king on seeing them could not contain himself for joy, but took his boys to his heart, and forgetting the intolerable pain of the past seemed like a dead man restored to life. Then they bowed their head at Vasishta's feet, who also embraced them most affectionately; and in turn they saluted all the Bráhmans and received their welcome blessings. They greeted Bharat too and his younger brother Satrughna, who at once raised

up Ráma and embraced him, and no less rejoiced to see Lakshman again. Thus they all met together with a display of the utmost affection.

*Dohá* 315.

The all-merciful and gracious lord had an appropriate greeting for all, whether citizens, or attendants, or kinsmen, or beggars, or ministers, or friends.

*Chaupái.*

At the sight of Ráma the wedding guests were repaid for their toilsome journey, and their demonstrations of love were beyond all telling. Beside their royal father the four boys seemed as incarnations of the four great ends of life. All the people of the city were delighted beyond measure at the sight of Dasarath and his sons; the gods rained down flowers and beat their drums; the nymphs of heaven danced and sang. Satánand with the Bráhmans and ministers of state, and the rhapsodists and bards, and players and minstrels who had come in deputation, after duly reverencing the king and the marriage guests, received permission to return. The whole city was exceedingly delighted that the procession had come before the day fixed for the wedding, and were supremely happy, praying God to lengthen the days and nights.

*Dohá* 316.

"Ráma and Síta are the perfection of beauty, and the two kings the perfection of virtue:" thus would say all the people of the city whenever they happened to meet.

*Chaupái.*

"Síta is the incarnation of Jánaki's merit, and Ráma of Dasarath's: no one has equalled them in devotion to Siva, nor has any one obtained such a reward as they have. And all we must be everything that is good, seeing that we have been born into the world as Janak's citizens, and have beheld the beauty of Jánaki and Ráma; who is so superlatively blest as we are? and we have yet to see Ráma's wedding, of all sights the best worth seeing." So too sweet-voiced maidens whispered to one another: "This marriage, my dear, will be a great treat. God has brought about an event of signal felicity in lodging these two brothers in the guest-chambers of our eyes.

*Dohá* 317.

Many and many a time will Janak lovingly send for Síta, and the two brothers, beautiful as a myriad Loves, will come to fetch her.

*Chaupái.*

There will be all kinds of hospitable entertainments; who, dear girl, would not rejoice in such a father-in-law? Every one in the place will be delighed at the sight of Ráma and Lakshman; and now two other lads, my friend, have come with the king, who are a match even for them; one dark, the other fair, but beautiful in every limb, so says every one who has seen them." Said one in reply: "I saw them to-day, and thought god must have made them with his own hands. Ráma and Bharat are so much alike that neither man nor woman could without looking close tell one from the other; while again Lakshman and Satrughna are also one in appearance, perfectly beautiful in every limb from head to foot; the soul would fain express its rapture, but language fails it, for there is nothing comparable to them in all the three spheres of creation."

*Chhand* 34.

No poet, however clever, says Tulsi Dás, could find aught comparable to them; for so unbounded is their strength, their courtesy, their knowledge, their amiability, and their beauty, that they have no peers but themselves. All the women in the city, spreading out their garments, made prayer to Brahma: "May all four brothers be married here, and may we sing their wedding song."

*Soraṭhá* 29.

Said the damsels to one another with streaming eyes and quivering body: "Friend, the two kings are of such boundless religious merit that for their sake Mahádev will bring it all about."

*Chaupái.*

In like manner they all expressed their desire, while their full heart overflowed with rapture. When the kings, who had come as Síta's suitors, saw the brothers, they all rejoiced and returned to their own homes extolling Ráma's high and spotless fame. In this fashion several days were spent to the joy alike of citizens and guests. At length the auspicious day arrived, in the cold season

in the pleasant month of Agahn. The Creator himself had carefully fixed the date, when the sign of the zodiac, the age of the moon, the conjunction of the stars, and the day of the week were one and all propitious. Of this he sent word through Nárad, and it was the very same that Janak's wise men had calculated. All the people on hearing this fact declared their astrologers to be very gods.

*Dohá* 318.

It was towards sunset,[1] the clearest and most delightful hour of the day, that the Bráhmans apprized Videha's king that the auspicious time had arrived.

*Chaupái.*

The monarch cried to the family priest: "What is now the cause of delay?" At once Satánand summoned the ministers, who all came bearing festal vases. Conches, drums, and tabors sounded; all decked their vases in auspicious wise: graceful damsels sang songs, and holy Bráhmans murmured Vedic texts. In this manner they went with all ceremony to the visitors' camp, and on beholding the king of Kosala's retinue it seemed to them that Indra was of much less glory. "The hour has come, be pleased to start." At this the drums gave a thundering beat. After consulting his *guru* and performing the family rites, the king and the saint sallied forth with all their host.

*Dohá* 319.

Brahma and all the other gods, on beholding the pomp and magnificence of Avadh's king, began to extol him with a thousand tongues and declare their own life to have been wasted.

*Chaupái.*

Seeing the auspiciousness of the time, the deities rained down flowers and beat their drums. Siva and Brahma and all the host

[1]The word *dhenu-dhúli* stands for the more common *go-dhúli*—*go* and *dhenu* being identical in meaning—and denotes the unfortunately very brief period of the day during which the Indian climate is thoroughly enjoyable. Williams in his Sanskrit dictionary explains the word as follows: "'dust of the earth'; a period of the day in the hot seasons when the sun is half risen; in the cold and dewy seasons when the sun is full but mild; and in the three other seasons, sunset; originally a time at which mist seems to rise from the earth." I had always myself considered that the first part of the compound was used in its more ordinary sense of 'a cow,' and that *go-dhúli* would be literally rendered 'dust of cows,' not 'dust of the earth.' The word is still current in village use, and when I have been moving about in the district in the cold weather I have heard it applied to

of heaven mounted their chariots and came in crowds to see Ráma's wedding, their heart and every limb throbbing and quivering with excess of love. They were so charmed with Janak's capital that their own realms seemed to them as nothing worth. They gaze with astonishment at the pavilions and all the marvellous decorations; at the men and women so beautiful and well-formed, so good and amiable and intelligent, before whom all the gods and goddesses seemed like the stars at the rising of the full moon. Above all was Brahma astounded at finding his own handiwork nowhere.

*Dohá* 320.

But Siva admonished them all: "Do not give way to such surprise; recover yourselves and reflect that this is the marriage of Síta and Raghubír,

*Chaupái.*

The mere mention of whose name destroys all that is evil in the world; in whose hand are the four great ends of human life; such are Síta and Ráma, says Love's destroyer." When Sambhu had thus admonished the gods, he again urged on his noble bull. Beholding Dasarath march forth, their soul was full of joy and their limbs trembled. The crowd of saints and Bráhmans who accompanied him seemed like incarnate gods ministering to him. In the midst shone forth the beautiful boys as it were final Beatitude manifested in its four phases.[1] As they gazed on the pair, of golden and sapphire hue, the gods were moved with violent love, and still more were they delighted at the sight of Ráma, and glorified the king and rained down flowers.

*Dohá* 321.

Again and again as Umá and Mahádev fixed their gaze upon Ráma, all-perfect in beauty from head to foot, their body trembled and their eyes filled with tears.

the hour of sunset, when the cattle were all coming home from pasture, and raising dense clouds of dust along the narrow lanes; a fact to which the speaker was evidently referring, though he may possibly have been wrong in his etymology.

[1]The four grades or phases of *apavarga, i.e.*, final beatitude, are *sálokya*, residence in the same heaven as god; *sárúpya*, being in the same form as god; *sámápya*, being in actual contact with god; and *sáyujya*, complete absorption into god.

*Chaupái.*

On his body, dark as a peacock's glistening neck, his bright raiment outshone the lightning; his wedding adornments of every kind were most exquisitely fashioned; his face more lustrous than a cloudless autumn moon; his eyes more brilliant than the lotus; his beauty, in short, so marvellous that no words can describe how it moved the soul. By his side shone forth his charming brother, making his mettlesome steed plunge and bound on the way, as also did all the attendant princes; while the family bards recited the glories of their line. As the king of the birds noted the action of the horse that Ráma bestrode, he blushed for shame; for its beauty was beyond all telling, as it might be Kámdev himself in equine disguise.

*Chhand* 35.

As though Kámdev himself in his love for Ráma had assumed an equine disguise of such resplendent beauty as to charm all creation with his youth and vigour and form and points and paces. A saddle flashed its splendours on his back, thick set with pearls and rubies; bridle too and band gleamed bright with jewels that dazzled the gaze of men, saints, and gods.

*Dohá* 322.

Obedient in every movement to the will of its lord, the gallant steed was as beautiful as a peacock that dances in response to a thunder-cloud, whose dark mass is irradiated by the stars of heaven and the fitful lightning.

*Chaupái.*

But not Sáradá herself could do justice to the noble steed on which Ráma rode. Sankara was enchanted with his beauty, and congratulated himself on having fifteen eyes. When Hari affectionately gazed on Ráma, he and Lakshmi were both equally charmed; while Brahma rejoiced to behold his beauty, and regretted that he had only eight eyes. Kartikeya exulted greatly that in the matter of eyes he was half as well off again as Brahma. When wise Indra looked at Ráma he thought Gautama's curse a great blessing; and all the gods broke out in Indra's praise, saying: To-day there is no one like him.[1] All heaven was delighted at the sight of Ráma, and there was joy above measure in the court of both the kings.

[1]The reason being that Indra has a thousand eyes.

*Chhand* 36.

There was exceeding joy in both royal courts; the welkin resounded with multitudinous kettledrums; the gods rained down flowers and shouted in their joy: Glory, glory, glory to Raghu's noble son. In this manner when they learnt that the procession was approaching, all sorts of music began to play, and the queen gave orders to her handmaids to prepare the auspicious materials for the lustral rite.

*Dohá* 323.

With many lights and torches and festal preparations of every kind, a body of graceful dames proceeded joyously to celebrate the lustral rite.

*Chaupái.*

With fawn-like eyes and face of moon-like brightness, each one was beautiful enough to rob Rati of all self-conceit. Attired in costly garments of different colours, covered all over with ornaments, and rendered beautiful in every limb, they sang more melodiously than the *koil* to the music of the bells on their wrists and waist and feet, as they moved with all the undulating grace of a wild elephant. All kinds of music played, and there were rejoicings both in heaven and in the city. Indráni, Sáradá, Lakshmi, and Bhawáni, the wisest of all the queens of heaven, assumed the disguise of woman's form, and flocked to the king's seraglio, singing delightfully with divine voice; and for joy there was no one who recognized them.

*Chhand* 37.

In their ecstatic joy as they went to receive the bridegroom, with melodious song and sweet music, who could tell who was who; the gods showered down flowers and everything was delightful. As they gazed upon the bridegroom, the source of bliss, they were all glad of heart, their lotus eyes overflowed with tears and their every limb quivered with rapture.

*Dohá* 324.

The joy of Síta's mother on beholding Ráma's gallant appearance was more than a thousand Sáradás and Seshnágs could tell in a hundred ages.

*Chaupái.*

Restraining her tears out of regard for the auspiciousness of the event, the queen with gladness of heart performed the lustral rite, and diligently completed the entire ceremony in accordance with Vedic prescription and family usage. The five instruments of music[1] were accompanied by festal chanting, and rich carpets of different kinds were spread upon the ground. After the lustral rite and the oblation Ráma proceeded to the pavilion. So great was the splendour and magnificence of Dasarath and his retinue that Indra was put to shame by it. From time to time the gods rained down flowers, while the Bráhmans repeated the appropriate propitiatory texts.[2] There was such jubilation on earth and in heaven that no one could hear himself speak, much less any one else. In this manner Ráma entered the pavilion, where the libation was offered, and he was conducted to his throne.

*Chhand* 38.

When the bridegroom was seated on the throne and the lustral rite was performed, all rejoiced at the sight, scattering around him jewels and raiment and ornaments in profusion, while women sang festal songs. Brahma and all the other gods disguised as noble Bráhmans witnessed the spectacle, and as they gazed on the glorious son of the lotus race of Rághu, reckoned it the happiest moment of their life.

*Dohá* 325.

The barber and torch-maker and singers and dancers, who gathered up the offerings that had been scattered about Ráma, bowed their head and invoked blessings upon him from a heart that was bursting with joy.

*Chaupái.*

Janak and Dasarath joined most affectionately in the observance of every custom, whether religious or secular; and the royal pair were

[1]The five kinds of music are as follows: the *tantri*, or sitára; the *tál*; the *jhánjh*; the *nakára*; and fifthly, the trumpet, fife, or other wind instrument.

[2]The prayer, or propitiatory text, ordinarily known by the name of *sánti* is as follows: *Om. Sanno Mitrah sam Varunah sanno bhavatvaryamá sanna Indro Vrihaspatih sanno Vishnur urukramah namo Brahmane namaste Vayo twam eva pratyaksham Brahmásitwám eva pratyaksham Brahma vadishyámi ritam vadishyámi satyam vadishyámi tan mám avatu tad vaktáram avatvavatu mám avatu vaktáram. Om. Sántis santis sántih.*

so glorious a sight that the poet, searching whereto to liken them, and finding nothing, must acknowledge himself defeated, and admit that they were comparable only to themselves. The gods beheld with delight the two fathers and rained down flowers and sang their praises: Since Brahma first created the world, we have seen and heard of many marriages, but never till this day have we seen a match so perfect in all respects, and two such well-matched fathers. At the sound of this voice from heaven, so gracious and yet so true, there was on both sides a marvellous access of love. Janak led the way with due honours to the pavilion, offering libations and unrolling a carpet as he went.

*Chhand* 39.

Beholding the beauty of the manifold decorations of the pavilion even the saints were astonished; but the wise Janak with his own hands conducted them all to their seats. Paying the same honour and respect to Vasishta as to his own patron divinity, he received his blessing; but the supreme devotion with which he greeted Viswamitra was of a kind that surpasses description.

*Dohá* 326.

With great joy the king did homage to Vámadeva too and the other saints, and gave them all exalted thrones and received their blessing.

*Chaupái.*

Again he did homage to the lord of Kosala, taking him to be the peer of Mahádev, yea, none other; with clasped hands and in humble phrase extolling him and enlarging on his own marvellous good fortune. Then to all the wedding guests he paid the same homage in every respect as to the bridegroom's father, and assigned them all appropriate seats. How can I with one tongue describe all the pageant? With gifts and compliments and profuse apologies Janak did the honours to all his guests. Brahma, Vishnu, Mahádev, the eight guardians of the world[1] and the god of day, who knew Raghubír's glory, disguised themselves as learned Bráhmans and

[1]The guardians of the eight quarters of the world are Indra, of the east; Agni, of the south-east; Yama, of the south; Nirriti, of the south-west; Varuna, of the west; Vayu, or Marut, of the north-west; Kuvera, of the north; Isana, or Siva, of the north-east. Some lists substitute Súrya, 'the sun,' and Chandra, or Soma, 'the moon,' for Nirriti and Isana: others again give the Sun and Moon and the Six Planets.—*Williams.*

were delighted spectators of the festivities. Janak, though he recognized them not, paid them homage as gods, and led them to exalted seats.

*Chhand* 40.

Who could tell who was who, when there was no one who could answer even for himself. As they gazed on the bridegroom, the root of joy, joy was diffused on all sides. When he saw the gods the all-wise Ráma assigned them what seats they fancied; and the heavenly powers were delighted to behold the gracious manner of their lord.

*Dohá* 327.

As the partridge drinks in the light of the moon, so their eyes reverently drank in the beauty of Ráma's face with the utmost rapture.

*Chaupái.*

Perceiving that the time had arrived, Vasishta called, and Satánand came with ready obedience. "Go now and quickly bring the bride." On receiving this order, the saint went gladly, and on hearing his message the queen with all her attendants was delighted, and sent for the Bráhman ladies and the elders of the tribe, and with songs of joy performed all the family rites. The goddesses who were disguised as women were all so amiable and lovely, in the first bloom of their youth,[1] that the ladies were charmed to see them, and, though not recognizing them, held them more dear than life. Again and again the queen did them honour, accounting them the equals of Umá, Ramá, and Sáradá. After dressing Síta and forming in procession they joyously conducted her to the pavilion.

*Chhand* 41.

Reverently and with auspicious pomp her attendant ladies conducted Síta, each of them of lovely form and superbly adorned, moving with the voluptuous grace of a young elephant. At the sound of their melodious strains the saints forgot their meditations, the god of love and the *koil* were abashed; while the bells on their

[1]Hindus of the olden time had a perfect mania for classifying and defining, and have invented divisions and sub-divisions of every conceivable group of objects, with a definite technical name for each variety. Thus the word in the text, here translated 'in the bloom of youth,' is *syámá*, which is strictly defined as 'a woman from eight to sixteen years of age, resembling in complexion the blossom of the Priyangu and its slender stalk in shape.' There are many other varieties of the sex that have their distinctive marks specified with equal minuteness.

anklets and gleaming girdles rang out with the cymbals a delightful accompaniment as they moved.

*Dohá* 328.

Among her maidens Síta shines forth in native loveliness, like Bliss personified among the Graces.

*Chaupái.*

Her beauty is indescribable, so great is it, and so little my wit. When the wedding guests saw her approach, so exquisitely charming and every way divine, they all did homage to her from their inmost soul. At the sight of her Ráma was filled with love, and Dasarath and his sons were glad of heart beyond all telling. The gods did homage and rained down flowers; the saints gave their blessings in auspicious wise; there was a confused noise of singing and playing and general rejoicing throughout the city. In this manner Síta arrived at the pavilion, while the great saints joyously recited the set forms of prayer, and the two family *gurus* performed all the due rites and ceremonies.

*Chhand* 42-43.

After the ceremonies the *gurus* directed the glad Bráhmans to worship Gauri and Ganes: the gods in visible form accepted the homage, and gave their blessing, which they received with joy. Whatever dainty dish or condiment any holy man fancied at any time was at once supplied him by the table-attendants in plates and bowls of gold. Having reverently and dutifully performed all family rites in accordance with the Sun-god's prescription, and offered homage to the gods, they conducted Síta to her glorious throne. The mutual love with which Síta and Ráma regarded each other was too much to look upon; it exceeds all sense, or intelligence, or speech, or perception; how then can the poet express it?

*Dohá* 329.

At the time of the burnt sacrifice the Fire-god in person most graciously accepted the oblation, and all the Vedas in the guise of Bráhmans uttered the marriage formularies.

*Chaupái.*

What words can describe Janak's illustrious queen-consort, Síta's mother, in whose composition the creator had combined the

perfection of glory, piety, happiness, and beauty. At the due time the saints called her, and she came responsive to the summons with her attendant maidens. Then shone forth Sunayana at Janak's left hand, as Maina beside Himálaya. With their own hands the glad king and queen take and place before Ráma golden vases and costly jewelled trays full of holy water and delicious perfumes. The saints with auspicious voice recite the Veda, and at the proper time the heaven rains flowers, while the father and mother of the bride look on in rapture and begin to wash the holy feet.

*Chhand* 44—47.

Their whole frame quivering with excess of love they began to lave the lotus feet: while both in heaven and in the city there was singing and music and shouts of victory, bursting forth and overflowing in all directions. The lotus feet that ever gleam in the lake of Siva's bosom; by meditating upon which for a single moment every impurity of the soul and defilement of this wicked world is removed; by whose touch the sage's guilty wife attained salvation; whose honeyed fragrance, as the gods declare, is ever present on Sambhu's head; on which the bee-like soul of saints and ascetics ever dwells ere they reach the heaven of their desire; these holy feet are bathed by Janak 'midst the glad acclaim of all. The two family priests join the hands of the bride and bridegroom and recite their descent. The mystic union is completed, and at the sight Brahma and all the gods and men and saints were full of joy. As the bride's parents gazed on the gracious bridegroom both their soul and body were raptured with delight; and having completed every family and scriptural observance, the glorious monarch gave his daughter to her lord. As Himálaya gave Girijá to Mahádev, and as Ocean gave Lachhmi to Vishnu, in like manner did Janak bestow Síta on Ráma, and creation was glorified anew. After stationing the happy pair on one spot (the bride so fair of hue, the groom so dark) and performing the sacrifice with all due rite, and tying the knot, the circumambulation commenced.

*Dohá* 330.

At the sound of the huzzas and the minstrelsy and the recitation of the Veda and the auspicious chanting and the music, the all-wise gods were delighted and rained down flowers from the tree of paradise.

*Chaupái.*

The bride and bridegroom with measured paces performed the circumambulation, while all present feasted their adoring gaze on the spectacle. The beauty of the happy pair is not to be described; whatever comparison might be suggested would fall short of the reality. The lovely images of Ráma and Síta were reflected in the jewelled pillars, and sparkled like incarnations of Kámdev and Rati, who had come to witness Ráma's glorious weddings, and, from mingled curiosity and bashfulness, at one moment showed themselves openly and at another retired out of sight. All the spectators were enraptured, and like Janak forgot all about themselves. Joyously the saints bade them pace the circle round; the rite was accomplished and the marriage offerings made. Ráma applied the vermilion to Síta's forehead brilliant beyond all description; and his arm seemed like a serpent thirsting for ambrosia as it decorated her moon-like face with the red powder that filled his lotus hand. Then by Vasishta's direction the bride and bridegroom took their seat together.

*Chhand* 48—51.

When Ráma and Jánaki took their seat, Dasarath's soul was rejoiced and his frame quivered with emotion, as again and again he fixed his gaze upon them, and saw as it were his own virtue like the tree of paradise blossoming anew. There was rejoicing all over the world at the news of Ráma's wedding; how can it be described? I have but one tongue in my head, while the joy had no bounds. Then Janak having received Vasishta's order provided all things necessary for the marriage ceremonial, and summoned the three maidens, Mándavi, Sruti-kírti, and Urmilá. After affectionately performing every rite the king gave first to Bharat in marriage the beautiful and accomplished daughter of Kusa-ketu. Then next with all honour Janak bestowed upon Lakshman Jánaki's lovely younger sister; and finally gave away to Ripu-súdan the bright-eyed and charming Sruti-kírti, no less amiable than beautiful. As bride and bridegroom modestly gazed on each other and noticed the contrast[1] they were glad of heart; while every one delightedly

[1]Ráma and Bharat being dark were married to Jánaki and Mándavi, who were fair; while the fair bridegrooms Lakshman and Satrughna were wedded to the dark brides, Urmilá and Sruti-kírti.

applauded the beauty of the scene, and the gods rained down flowers. All equally beautiful, though diverse in hue, they shone resplendent in the pavilion, as though the four states of life with their several lords had met in one living soul.

*Dohá* 331.

The king of Avadh gazed with delight on his four sons and their brides; as though that jewel of monarchs had in them realized the four methods of religion and the four cognate ends of life.[1]

*Chaupái.*

All the princes were married with the same rites as I have described for Ráma. The enormous dowry was beyond description; the whole pavilion was full of gold and jewels. Shawls, robes and silks of all kinds in the greatest profusion and of immense value, elephants, chariots, horses, men-servants and maid-servants, and cows with gilded horns and hoofs, as beautiful as the cow of plenty; things so many that no one could count them, nor credit their number if he had not seen them. At the sight the guardians of the world broke out into praises of the dowry, and Avadh's king received it all most graciously. To every one who asked was given whatever he desired, and what remained over was taken to the guests' quarters. Then with folded hands and bated breath Janak courteously entreated all the bridegroom's party.

*Chhand* 52—55.

After courteously entreating all the marriage guests with high ceremony, gifts, apologies and compliments, he joyfully proceeded with much devotion to do his humble homage to the saintly throng. With bowed head he propitiated the gods, and thus, with hands clasped in prayer, addressed them all: "Gods and saints desire only a good will; can Ocean's wants be satisfied by a libation of a few drops?"[2] Again with clasped hands Janak and his brother

[1]The *chár phal, i.e.*, the four fruits, or ends of life, are, as has been before explained, *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Káma*, and *Moksha*, which are here compared to Dasarath's four sons. The four brides are likened to the *chár kriya*, or four methods of religion, which are either *Sevá*, *Sraddhá*, *Tapasya*, and *Bhakti*; that is to say, obedience, piety, penance, and faith; or according to another enumeration, *anushthána*, religious ceremonial; *udyog*, diligence; *rati*, love; and *virati*, detachment from the world.

[2]Yet though it derives no benefit from such a scanty offering, it both requires and accepts it.

spoke to the king of Kosala with winning words full of love and amiability: "O king, I am greatly ennobled by your alliance; know that my realm and all that I have is freely yours to command. Take these girls as your hand-maidens and graciously protect them, and pardon me my sin and presumption in sending a message to you." The glory of the Solar race in turn addressed his royal cousin in terms of highest honour; their courtesy was past all telling, and the love that overflowed their hearts. The deities rained down flowers as the monarch proceeded to the guest-chamber 'midst the crash of kettle-drums, the muttered recitation of the Veda, and glad rejoicings both on earth and in heaven. Then by the saint's command and singing auspicious strains as they went the fair ladies of the court conducted to the marriage pavilion the bridegrooms and their brides.

*Dohá* 332.

Again and again did Síta gaze upon Ráma with modest mien, but full of confidence at heart; and her eyes athirst with love outshone the fish in Kámdev's blazon.

*Chaupái.*

Dark in hue and full of untaught grace, his beauty put to shame a myriad Loves; his lac-stained feet gleamed like some lotus, the haunt of bee-like saintly souls; his pure and lustrous yellow robe outshone the rising sun or lightning-flash; the little bells on his waist-belt made a delicious tinkling; long were his arms and clasped with glittering bangles; his yellow *janeo* set him off to perfection; his signet ring would ravish all hearts; lustrous were all his many wedding adornments and the stars and collars on his broad breast; across his shoulders a yellow scarf with fringe of gems and pearls; with lotus eyes and bright pendants from his ears and a face the very storehouse of beauty; with lovely brows and charming nose, and on his forehead a most bewitching spot, while on his head the auspicious marriage-crown shone glorious with knotted pearls and gems.

*Chhand* 56—59.

The knotted gems and the crown and his comely person ravished all hearts; and not a woman or goddess, in heaven or earth, who

did not break a blade of grass[1] at the sight of his beauty. After scattering round about him jewels and raiment and adornments they perform the lustral rite, singing auspicious songs, while the gods rain down flowers, and bards, minstrels, and rhapsodists declare his glory. When the bride and bridegroom entered the marriage pavilion, great was the joy of the attendants, who with festive songs and in most loving wise began to perform the accustomed observances. Gauri herself taught Ráma, and Sáradá told Síta how to manage the mess of rice-milk; and all the ladies of the seraglio were so taken with the merry sport that they reckoned it the happiest moment of their lives. When Jánaki saw in the gems on her fingers the reflection of the all-beautiful, she dared not move her eyes or lithesome arm for fear of losing his presence. The rapture of delight, the ecstasy of love surpassed all telling; only those happy dames could comprehend it who escorted the bride and bridegroom to the guest-house. Then might be heard on all sides blessings and great exultation in heaven and on earth and a universal shout of joy: Long life to the four happy couples.

*Dohá* 333.

Hermits, saints and sages, the gods too on beholding their lord, sounded their kettledrums and returned in gladness, each to his own realm, raining down flowers and crying Victory, Victory. Then the four princes with their brides approached their father, and such was the glory, the felicity, and the rapture that it seemed to overflow the court like a torrent.

*Chaupái.*

Again there was a magnificent banquet, to which Janak sent and invited all the visitors. Carpets of richest stuff were spread as the king sallied forth with his sons. After reverently washing his guests' feet, he seated them all according to their rank. First Janak bathed the feet of Avadh's lord with a loving devotion past all telling; then he bathed Ráma's lotus feet, feet ever enshrined in Mahádev's heart; and also with his own hands bathed the feet of the three brothers, regarding them as Ráma's peers. To all the

[1]Either involuntarily from agitation and bashfulness, or as a charm to avert the evil eye; or to show how little they valued anything in the world in comparison with his beauty.

king assigned appropriate seats, and then gave his orders to the cooks, who with due ceremony set out the dishes, made all of jewels instead of leaves, and stitched with golden pins.

*Dohá* 334.

The quick and obsequious waiting-men passed round, and in a moment every guest was supplied with rice and condiments and fragrant butter, and everything luscious and savoury and nice.

*Chaupái.*

After making the five oblations[1] they began to eat, listening with delight the while to allusive songs. There were confections of many kinds, sweeter than nectar or than words can tell, which the well-trained waiters handed round, and such an infinite variety of sauces that no one could remember all their names, with food of the four kinds mentioned in the sacred books and an indescribable variety of each kind, and seasonings of the six flavours, and each flavour exhibited in a countless number of dishes. As the banquet proceeded, jests were bandied about in pleasant wise, and not a man or woman but heard his name brought in. Louder and broader grew the raillery of the festive hour, and the king and the whole assembly were moved to laughter as they listened. In this manner they all feasted, then punctiliously rinsed out the mouth :

*Dohá* 335.

And Janak in due form presented Dasarath and all his guests with *pán*, and the glorious king then retired to his own apartment.

*Chaupái.*

There was ever some new rejoicing in the city, and the whole day and night seemed gone like a minute. At early dawn the best of monarchs woke, and mendicants began to chant his praises. As he gazed upon the gallant princes and their brides, the rapture of his soul was beyond all telling. After performing his morning devotions he went to his *guru*, with his heart full of love and exultation, and clasping his hands in prayer bowed before him, and said with a voice of mellifluous sweetness : "Hearken, king of saints ; it is by your favour that to-day my toils have been rewarded. Now, holy father,

[1]The five vital airs to which oblations are made are *práṇa, apáṇa, samáṇa, vyáṇa*, and *udáṇa*.

summon the Bráhmans and present them all with cows with costly adornments." On hearing these words the *guru* much applauded the king, and sent to summon the whole saintly throng.

*Dohá* 336.

Then came Vámadeva and Nárad and Válmíki and Jábáli and Visvamitra and all the other great saints and ascetics.

*Chaupái.*

The king threw himself upon the ground before them all and worshipped them, and then conducted them to seats of honour. Next he sent for 400,000 cows, all as gentle and beautiful as the cow of paradise, and after decorating them in every possible way bestowed them with great joy upon the saints, with many a phrase of studied humility, declaring it to be the happiest day of his whole life. On receiving their blessing the king, the pride of the Solar race, rejoiced, and next sent for all the begging fraternity and gave them, according as each desired, gold, or apparel, or jewels, or horses, or elephants, or chariots. They all left loudly telling and singing his praises: Glory, glory, glory to the lord of the Sun-god's race. Such were the rejoicings at Ráma's wedding, beyond all that could be told even had I a thousand tongues.

*Dohá* 337.

Again and again the lord bowed his head at Viswamitra's feet: "All this happiness, O king of saints, is the result of your benignant regard."

*Chaupái.*

King Dasarath spent the whole night extolling Janak's affection[1] and amiability and magnificence; every day on rising he asked permission to return home, but Janak would lovingly detain him. There was constantly some new fête in his honour, and every day a thousand different kinds of entertainment. The rejoicings in the city never flagged, and no one liked to think of Dasarath's departure. In this manner many days were spent, and the guests were fast bound by the cords of love, till Viswamitra and Sátanand went and told Videha's lord: You must now let Dasarath take his leave,

[1]The line, which I translate, stands thus: *nrip sab ráti saráhat bíti.* Another reading is: *nrip sab bhanti saráh bibhúti.*

even though you cannot part with your love for him. The king replied: It is well, and summoned his ministers, who came and bowed the head crying: All hail!

*Dohá* 338.

"Make it known in the palace that Avadh's lord wishes to depart." At these words the ministers, Bráhmans, counsellors, and princes were greatly moved.

*Chaupái.*

When it was noised in the city that the guests were leaving, every one anxiously asked his neighbour if it were a fact. When they heard they were actually going, all were as unhappy as a lotus that fades in the evening. Every place where the visitors had put up on their arrival was crowded with parting presents,[1] fruits and confections of every kind, and dishes too various for description. A multitude of porters laden with wearing apparel[2] and cooks beyond number were sent by Janak with 100,000 horses and 25,000 chariots, all exquisitely finished throughout, with 10,000 powerful elephants duly caparisoned, at sight of which earth's guardian elephants would feel ashamed of themselves; besides wagons full of gold and raiment and jewels; buffaloes also and cows, and things of all kinds.

*Dohá* 339.

The dowry, moreover, given by Videha's king was immeasurable and beyond all telling; and Indra, had he seen it, would have thought the riches of the universe as nothing in comparison.

*Chaupái.*

When the whole equipage had been thus arranged Janak despatched it to Avadh. On hearing that the guests were about to start, all the queens were as unhappy as fish when water fails. Again and again they clasped Síta to their bosom and blessed and exhorted her, saying: "May you ever be beloved by your husband, and with him live a long and happy life: this is my blessing. Be obedient to your new father and mother and guru, and regarding your lord's displeasure[3] do as he bids." Her sweet-voiced companions

[1]The word *sídh* probably stands for *sidhya*, 'auspicious,' though it might be for *sídhu*, 'wine.'

[2]For *basan*, 'wearing apparel,' some çopies read *basah*, 'oxen.'

[3]In this line *rukh* may be the Persian word meaning 'face;' but it is more probably the Sanskrit *rush*, 'displeasure.'

too in their overpowering affection reminded her of woman's crowning duty. Again and again after thus duly admonishing them the queens clasped the four brides to their bosom, and time after time, in the midst of their maternal embraces, exclaimed: Why has God made woman?

*Dohá* 340.

Then came the joyous Ráma, the glory of the Solar race, with his brothers to Janak's palace to take leave.

*Chaupái.*

All the people of the city, whether men or women, ran to see the four brothers so lovely and so unaffected. Said one: "To-day they have made up their mind to go, and Janak has completed all the preparations for their departure; so feast your eyes on their beauty for the last time. All four princes have been most welcome visitors; who can say, friend, what we have done to deserve that god should bring our eyes such guests. Like a man at the point of death who is given ambrosia; or as one who has been hungry all his life and discovers the tree of paradise; or as a guilty woman who approaches Hari's feet, so am I after seeing them. Gaze upon Ráma's beauty and treasure his image in your heart as it were the jewel in a serpent's hood." In this manner the princes gladdened the eyes of all as they proceeded to the palace.

*Dohá* 341.

The ladies all rose in their joy as they beheld their exquisite beauty; and the mothers of the brides, in token of their delight, pass the lustral lamp around their heads and scatter gifts.

*Chaupái.*

Full of love at the vision of Ráma's beauty, they affectionately fall at his feet again and again, nor are conscious of shame, so rapt is their soul in devotion and an involuntary attachment beyond all description. After bathing him and his brothers and rubbing his body with cosmetics, they lovingly entertain him at a banquet of the six flavours. Then seeing that the time had come, Ráma said to them in the most amiable, loving, and modest tone: "The king is desirous of starting for Avadh and has sent us to take leave of you.

O mother, be pleased to give me your order and ever regard me with affection as your own child." At these words the queens grieved sore and were too overcome by love to speak a word, but clasped their daughters to their bosom and then meekly gave them to their lords.

*Chhand* 60.

Meekly her mother surrendered Síta to Ráma, crying again and again with hands clasped in prayer: "Ah my son, what a sacrifice! but you are all-wise, and to you are apparent the thoughts of all men. Know well that Síta is dear as life to the king and myself, nay, to all her kinsfolk and all the people of the city; consider her amiability and her affection and accept her as your own servant.

*Soratha* 30.

You are the fulness of desire, the crown of wisdom, the beloved of the universe, quick to recognize merit in your votaries, destroyer of evil, Ráma the all-merciful."

*Chaupái.*

So saying the queens still clung to his feet and their voice seemed lost as it were in the quicksands of love. On hearing their most affectionate address, Ráma showed them the highest honour, and with clasped hands begged his congé, again and again making them obeisance. When he had received their blessing, he bowed once more and then with his brothers took his leave. Treasuring up his sweet and gracious image in their heart, the queens at first seemed paralyzed by excess of love; but summoning up courage they called their daughters and again and again gave them a maternal embrace; then leading them a few steps would take them to their arms yet again with ever growing mutual love. Time after time they left their attendants for yet one more last embrace, as a heifer not yet weaned from the cow.

*Dohá* 342.

Every one in the palace, attendants and all were so overpowered by emotion that it seemed as though they had made the city of Videha the very home of piteousness and lovers' partings.

*Chaupái.*

The pet parrots and *mainas*, that Jánaki had kept in golden cages and taught to speak, cry in their agitation: Where is the

princess? and, on hearing, which of them was not robbed of all peace of mind? When birds and beasts were thus distrest, how can the feelings of the people be told? Then came Janak with his brother (Kusadhwaja) overflowing with love and his eyes full of tears. As he gazed upon Síta, all his courage deserted him and his eminent asceticism lasted but in name. As he clasped Jánaki to his bosom, the stronghold of his stern philosophy was broken down. All his wise counsellors admonished him; and seeing the unfitness of the time he recovered himself, and again and again taking his daughter to his heart he ordered a gorgeous pálki to be got ready.

*Dohá* 343.

The whole court was overpowered with emotion, when the king perceiving that the auspicious moment had arrived seated the maiden in the pálki, with his thoughts intent upon Ganes, the author of success.

*Chaupái.*

The monarch gave his daughter much advice and instructed her in the whole duty of women and in family customs. He bestowed upon her many men-servants and maid-servants and all her own favourite attendants. As she went on her way the citizens were in distress, but all good signs and auspicious omens were forthcoming. Bráhmans and ministers with all their retinue joined company to escort the Rája. The wedding guests made ready their chariots and elephants and horses, and there was a tumultuous noise of music. Then Dasarath called up all the Bráhmans and gratified them with gifts and compliments, and putting the dust of their lotus feet upon his head rejoiced—great king as he was—to obtain their blessing. As he set forth on his way with his thoughts on Ganes, every omen of good occurred.

*Dohá* 344.

The gods rained down flowers, the heavenly nymphs sang for joy as the king of Avadh set forth for his capital 'midst the clash of jubilant music.

*Chaupái.*

Courteously the king dismissed the burghers and reverently bade all the mendicants approach and bestowed upon them

ornaments and clothes and horses and elephants, and affectionately cherishing them made them stand up before him. After again and again reciting his praises they turned home with Ráma in their heart. Though Kosalá's lord spoke time after time, Janak in his exceeding love would not turn back. Once more said the king in gracious tones : I beg you to turn back, sire ; you have come a great distance. At last he dismounted and remained standing, his eyes overflowing with love's torrent. Then said Videha's lord with folded hands and in a voice fraught with the ambrosia of affection : " How can I fitly express my unworthiness, on whom my lord has conferred such high honour ? "

*Dohá* 345.

Kosalá's king in return showed the profoundest respect to the father of the bride and his retinue ; and as they embraced with mutual courtesy their heart could not contain the love they felt.

*Chaupái.*

Janak bowed his head to the throng of saints and received a blessing from all. Next he reverently saluted his sons-in-law, the four brothers, each a treasure of beauty, amiability, and accomplishments ; and clasping his gracious lotus hands he cried in accents begotten of love : " O Ráma, how can I tell thy praise ; swan of the Mánas lake of the saints' and Mahádev's soul ; for whose sake ascetics practise their asceticism ; devoid of anger, infatuation, selfishness, and pride ; the all-pervading Brahm, the invisible, the immortal, the supreme spirit, at once the sum and negation of all qualities ; whom neither words nor fancy can pourtray; whom all philosophy fails to expound; whose greatness the divine oracles declare unutterable, and who remainest the self-same in all time, past, present, or future ?

*Dohá* 346.

Source of every joy, thou hast revealed thyself to my material vision; for nothing in the world is beyond the reach of him to whom God is propitious.

*Chaupái.*

Thou hast magnified me in every way, and recognizing me as one of thy servants hast made me thy very own. Not ten thousand

Sáradás and Seshnágs, though they kept up their count for a myriad ages, could tell all my good fortune or thy perfections ; know this, O Raghunáth ; yet I have somewhat to say—for I have this ground of confidence that thou art easily appeased by the slightest evidence of affection—and therefore time after time I implore with clasped hands that never may my soul be deluded into deserting thy feet." On hearing these excellent sentiments, the true birth of devotion, even Ráma, in whom all pleasure ever dwells, was pleased and with much courtesy saluted his father-in-law, holding him equal to his own sire, or Viswamitra or Vasishta. Next he bowed himself before Bharat and affectionately embraced him and gave him his blessing.

*Dohá* 347.

Then the king embraced and blessed both Lakshman and Satrughna, and all again and again bowed the head, being overpowered with mutual love.

*Chaupái.*

At last after many courtesies and flattering speeches Ráma and his brothers proceeded on their way. Then went Janak and clasped Viswamitra by the feet and put the dust of his feet on his head and eyes : " Hearken, O greatest of saints ; now that I have seen you, I am persuaded that nothing is beyond my attainment. Such bliss and glory as the sovereigns of the universe might desire, though they would be ashamed to express their longing, has all, my lord, been brought within my reach, for all prosperity follows upon seeing you." After again and again humbly bowing the head, the king received his blessing and took leave. The marriage procession set forth to the sound of music, and the whole populace, great and small, were all enraptured and, as they gazed upon Ráma and feasted their eyes upon him, were happy for life.

*Dohá* 348.

Halting at convenient stages on the road, to the great delight of the people, the procession on an auspicious day drew near to Avadh.

*Chaupái.*

'Midst beat of kettledrums and noise of many tabors and sackbuts and conches, and a din of horses and elephants, and clash of

cymbals and drums and sweet-tuned clarions, when the citizens heard the procession coming, they were all in a tremor of delight, and every one began to decorate his own house and the markets and streets and squares and gates of the city. The whole roadway was watered with perfumes; on every side were festal squares filled in with elegant devices; the show in the bazar was beyond all telling, with wreaths and flags and banners and canopies. Trees of the areca-nut, and the plantain and the mango, the *nálsuri*, the *kadamb* and the *tamála*, were transplanted all laden with fruit, and grew into fine trees as soon as they touched the soil, being set in jewelled screens of exquisite workmanship.

*Dohá* 349.

In house after house festal vases of every kind were set out in order, and Brahma and all the gods were delighted as they gazed upon the city of Ráma.

*Chaupái.*

At that time the king's palace was so resplendent that the god of love was distracted by the sight of such magnificence. It was as though everything auspicious and of good omen and all beauty, all plenteousness and prosperity and joy and felicity and gladness had come in bodily form to visit king Dasarath. There was a universal longing to get a sight of Ráma and Jánaki. Troops of fair women were crowding together, each exceeding in loveliness the Love-god's queen, all with festal offerings and torches and singing, as it were so many Sarasvatis. The rejoicings in the palace at that glad time are beyond all description. Ráma's mother Kausalyá and the other queens were too overcome with love to think about themselves.

*Dohá* 350.

They bestowed large gifts upon the Bráhmans, after worshipping Ganes and Mahádev, and were as rejoiced as Poverty would be on finding the four great prizes of life.

*Chaupái.*

Each royal mother was so overcome with love and delight that her feet refused to walk and the whole body was paralyzed. Greatly longing for a sight of Ráma, they all began preparing the lustral

lamps. Instruments of music were played in various modes, as the glad Sumitrá arranged her auspicious offering of turmeric, *dúb* grass, curds, sprigs and flowers, *pán*, betelnut and well-favoured roots, rice, blades of wheat, yellow pigment, parched grain, and bunches of the graceful tulsi in embossed golden vases, so exquisitely beautiful that they seemed like nests made for Love's own birdlings. The auspicious offerings and the perfumes were beyond all telling; there was nothing of good omen which each one of the queens had not prepared. With lustral lights arranged in various devices they sing for joy melodious festal strains.

*Dohá* 351.

With golden salvers in their lotus hands, laden with their offerings, and their body quivering with emotion, the queens go forth with joy to perform the lustration.

*Chaupái.*

The heaven was darkened with the fumes of incense, as though overhung with Sávan's densest thunderclouds; the gods rained down garlands of flowers from the tree of paradise, which seemed to the beholders as cranes in graceful flight; the lustrous jewelled festoons resembled the rainbow; the maidens on the house-tops, now in sight and now out of sight, were like the fitful flashes of lightning; the beat of the drums was as the crash of thunder; the beggars as clamorous as the cuckoos and the frogs and peacocks; the sweet perfumes were as copious showers of rain, and all the people of the city like the freshened pastures. Seeing that the time had arrived, the *guru* gave the word, and the glory of Raghu's line made his entry into the city, mindful at heart of Sambhu and Girijá and Ganes, and exulting greatly, he and all his retinue.

*Dohá* 352.

Every omen was auspicious; the gods beat their drums and rained down flowers, while the heavenly nymphs danced for joy and sang jubilant songs of triumph.

*Chaupái.*

Bards, minstrels, rhapsodists, mimes and players chanted his glory that irradiates the three spheres. In all ten regions of the

heaven might be heard loud shouts of victory intermingled with the religious intoning of the Veda. All kinds of music played, and gods in heaven and men on earth were alike enraptured. The magnificence of the procession was past all telling, and the joy was more than heart could contain. The citizens made a profound obeisance to the king, and then were gladdened by a sight of Ráma. They scatter around him jewels and vestments with their eyes full of tears and their body all tremulous with excitement. Their wives move over his head the lustral lights and rejoice greatly to behold the four noble princes ; but when they lifted the curtain of the well-appointed pálki and saw the brides they were still more glad.

*Dohá* 353.

In this manner, to the delight of all, they arrived at the gate of the palace, where the glad queens waved the lustral lights over the princes and their brides.

*Chaupái.*

Time after time they perform the ceremony in a rapture of love that is beyond all words. They scatter around in boundless profusion gold and silver ornaments and gems and silks of every kind, and as they gaze on their four sons and their brides are overwhelmed with the bliss of heaven. Again and again as they regard the beauty of Ráma and Síta, they think with joy that this is the happiest moment of their life. As her companions look again and again into Síta's face they sing and exult over their good fortune. Every moment the gods rain down flowers, 'midst dancing and singing and obsequious homage. Seeing four such charming couples, Sáradá looked up all her similes ; but not one would do ; all seemed unworthy, and she could only stand at gaze, enchanted with their loveliness.

*Dohá* 354.

After performing all the rites prescribed by the Veda or family usage, they conduct their sons and their brides to the palace, sprinkling lustral water, spreading carpets in the way, and waving torches.

*Chaupái.*

After seating the brides and their grooms on four thrones so magnificent that they seemed as if made by Love's own hands, they

proceeded reverently to lave their sacred feet, and to do them homage—all holy as they were—with incense and lights and oblations, in accordance with Vedic ritual. Time after time they pass the torch around and wave over their head gorgeous fans and chauris, and scatter profuse gifts: for each royal mother was as full of exultation as a devotee who has obtained beatitude; or a man sick all his life who has gotten an elixir; or a born beggar who has found the philosopher's stone; or a blind man restored to sight; or a dumb man endued with eloquence; or a warrior who has triumphed in battle.

*Dohá* 355-56.

Greater by a hundred millions times than their joy was the rapture of the queens when Ráma and his brothers returned home married. As the royal matrons performed the accustomed ceremonies, the brides and their grooms were much confused, but Ráma smiled to himself on beholding their joy and delight.

*Chaupái.*

In due fashion they did homage to the gods and the spirits of their ancestors, and every imagination of the heart was satisfied. Humbly they begged of all the highest boon, namely, the prosperity of Ráma and his brothers, and the gods unseen conferred their blessing. The matrons in their joy took them to their bosom; while the king sent for all who had joined in the procession and gave them carriages, and raiment, and jewels, and ornaments. Then, on receiving permission, and still cherishing the image of Ráma in their heart, they returned in joy each to his own abode. All the people of the city, both men and women, were clad in festal attire, and in every home was a noise of jubilant music. Anything that a beggar begged was at once bestowed upon him by the glad king, and every attendant and every minstrel band was overwhelmed with gifts and compliments.

*Dohá* 357.

All profoundly bowing invoke blessings upon him and sing his praises, as the king with his *guru* and the Bráhmans proceeded to the palace.

*Chaupái.*

Under Vasishta's directions he reverently performed every ceremony prescribed either by usage or the Veda. The queens on

seeing the throng of Bráhmans thought themselves most highly favoured and rose to greet them. After bathing their feet and doing them all due homage, the king feasted them at a banquet and loaded them with affectionate civilities and gifts. Grateful at heart, they blessed him at parting. To the son of Gádhi he paid special homage, saying: My lord, there is no man in the world so blest as I am; and with many other flattering speeches both he and his queens took of the dust of his feet. Next he assigned him a splendid apartment within the palace; the king and his royal consorts alike watching his every wish. Again he adored his lotus feet with the greatest humility and devotion.

*Dohá* 358.

The princes and their brides, the king and his royal consorts again and again did reverence to the guru's feet and received the holy man's blessing.

*Chaupái.*

With humility of heart and deep devotion he placed before him his sons and everything that he possessed. But the great saint asked only for the accustomed offering, and invoking upon him every blessing set out with joy on his homeward way, with the image of Ráma and Síta impressed upon his heart. Then were summoned the Bráhman dames and the elders of the tribe and invested with fair robes and ornaments; and next the younger ladies of the house,[1] who too were presented with dresses such as each most fancied. Every person with any claim to be remembered received from the jewel of kings suitable remembrance according to his taste; while more dear and honoured friends were overwhelmed with courtesies. The gods, who witnessed Raghubír's marriage, rained down flowers as they applauded the spectacle,

*Dohá* 359.

and with beat of drum returned each to his own realm; all highly delighted and talking to one another of Ráma's glory with irrepressible rapture.

[1]The *suásini* in a Hindu marriage takes much the same place as a bridesmaid in the west; and the word might be so translated, were it not that it is essential for the *suásini* to be herself married and with her husband alive.

*Chaupái.*

The king showed every one all possible honour, and with a heart full to overflowing of gladness proceeded to the private apartments, and then gazing upon the princes and their brides took them to his bosom in a rapturous embrace, and with a joy beyond all telling. Seating his little daughters in his lap in a most affectionate manner, he again and again caressed them with gladness of heart. All the ladies of the harem were charmed at the sight, and their soul was filled with happiness and exultation, while they listened with delight to the king's account of the marriage and his praises of king Janak's virtue and amiability, and the kindness of his reception and his generous magnificence. The king told it all like a hired encomiast, and the queens were enraptured when they heard of all that had been done.

*Dohá* 360.

After bathing with his sons the king summoned his guru's kinsmen and entertained them at a sumptuous banquet till five hours of the night were spent.

*Chaupái.*

Lovely women sang joyous songs, and the night was one of exquisite happiness. As they rose from their seats all were presented with *pán*, and decorated with beautiful and sweet-scented garlands; then after one more look at Ráma and bowing the head they received the royal permission to retire each to his own abode. The display of love and rapturous delight and the beauty of the court at that time was more than could be told by a hundred Sáradás, or Seshnágs, or by the Veda, or Brahma, or Mahádev, or Ganes: how then can I tell it, any more than an earthly serpent could support the world on its head? After showing every one the highest honour, the king in gentle tones addressed the queens: "The brides are but children, and have come to a strange house; watch over them as closely as the eyelid guards the eye.

*Dohá* 361.

Go and put them to bed, for they are tired and sleepy." And so saying he retired to his own couch with his thoughts intent on Ráma's feet.

*Chaupái.*

On hearing the king's kind words, they made ready the bed, which was of gold and set with gems, with various rich coverings as soft and white as the froth of milk and pillows finer than words can tell. In the jewelled chamber were sweet-scented garlands, and a beautiful canopy flashing with lustrous gems which defied description; no one who had not seen it could imagine it. When they had prepared this exquisite couch, they took up Ráma and lovingly laid him down upon it, who again and again had to tell his brothers to leave him before they too retired to rest. On seeing his dark little body, so soft and delicate, the fond mothers cried: "O my son, how could you kill on the way the terrible monster Táraká?

*Dohá* 362.

How were you able to slay those savage demons, those ferocious warriors, who in battle held no man of any account, the vile Márícha and Subáhu and all their host?

*Chaupái.*

It was by the saint's favour, I vow, my son, that God averted from you countless calamities, while you and your brother guarded the sacrifice; and by your guru's blessing you acquired all knowledge. At the touch of the dust of your feet the hermit's wife attained to salvation: the whole world is fulfilled with your glory: in the assembly of princes you broke Siva's bow, though hard as a tortoise-shell or a thunderbolt; you have won universal glory and renown and Jánaki for your bride, and have now with your brothers returned home married. All your actions are more than human; it is only by Viswamitra's good favour that you have prospered. To-day my birth into the world has borne fruit, now that I see your moon-like face, my son. The days that were spent without seeing you God ought not to take into account at all."

*Dohá* 363.

Ráma in most modest phrase reassured the royal dames, and meditating on the feet of Sambhu, and his *guru*, and all Bráhmans, he closed his eyes in sleep.

*Chaupái.*

As he slept, his pretty and piquant little mouth gleamed like a red lotus, half closed at eventide. In every house women kept vigil, and jested with one another in auspicious wise. The city was so brilliant, nay, so brilliant the night itself, that the queens cried "See, girls, see." The matrons slept with the beauteous brides enfolded in their arms as lovingly as a serpent would clasp to its bosom the precious jewel from inside its head. At the holy hour of dawn the lord awoke ere Chanticleer had well begun to crow. Minstrels and bards proclaimed his praises and the citizens flocked to the gate to do him homage. The four brothers saluted the Bráhmans, the gods, their *guru*, and their father and mother, and gladly received their blessing, and while the queens reverentially gazed upon their face advanced with the king to the door.

*Dohá* 364.

Pure though they were in themselves, they performed all the customary ablutions and bathed in the holy river and completed their morning devotions ere they returned to their sire.

*Chaupái.*

The king on seeing them took them to his bosom. Then at his command they gladly seated themselves. The whole court was rejoiced at the sight of Ráma, and accounted their eyes supremely blest. Then came saint Vasishta and Visvamitra and were conducted to exalted thrones. Father and sons reverently adored their feet, and both the holy men rejoiced as they gazed on Ráma. Vasishta recited sacred legends while the monarch and his queens listened. He told with joy in diffuse strain of all the doings of Gádhi's son, which surpass even the imagination of the saints. Cried Vámadeva: "The tale is true; its fame has become renowned through the three worlds." All who heard were glad, but in Ráma and Lakshman's heart there was exceeding joy.

*Dohá* 365.

Thus passed the days in perpetual delight, happiness, and festivity; and the whole of Avadh was full to overflowing with bliss that was ever on the increase.

*Chaupái.*

After calculating an auspicious day they loosened the string on the wrist[1] with no little solemnity and rejoicing. The gods, beholding the constant succession of delights, were in raptures and begged of Brahma that they might be born at Avadh. Visvamitra was always wishing to take leave, but was persuaded by Ráma's affectionate entreaties to stay on. Day after day, seeing the king's devotion and the excellence of his nature, the great saint was loud in his praises. When he asked permission to go the king was greatly moved and with his sons stood before him in the way, saying: "My lord, all that I have is yours, and I, my sons, and my wives are your servants; be ever gracious to these boys and allow me to see you." So saying, the king with his sons and his queens fell at his feet, and speech failed his tongue. The Bráhman invoked upon him every kind of blessing and set forth amidst a display of affection that is past all telling, Ráma and his brothers lovingly escorting him till they received orders to return.

*Dohá* 366.

The moon of Gádhi's race went on his way rejoicing and praising to himself the beauty of Ráma, the piety of the king, and the magnificence of the marriage festivities.

*Chaupái.*

Then Vámadeva, the learned *guru* of the house of Raghu, again told the story of Gádhi's son. As he listened to the saint's high fame, the king thought to himself how efficacious his own good deeds had been. At his command the crowd dispersed, while the king and his sons entered the palace. Everywhere the glory of Ráma's wedding was sung, and his holy fame was diffused through the three worlds. From the day that Ráma brought his wife home, all delight made its home at Avadh. The rejoicings attendant on the lord's marriage were more than the tongue of the serpent king could tell, but knowing the praises of Ráma and Síta to be a mine

[1]A few days before marriage the wrist is bound round with a piece of cloth containing some minute particles of different things that are supposed to possess some hidden virtue; and this is not taken off again till after the marriage is completed.

of auspiciousness and the very life and salvation of the race of poets, I too have tried to sing them, in the hope of thus sanctifying my song.

*Chhand* 61-62.

For the purpose of sanctifying his song has Tulsi told of Ráma's glory; but the acts of Raghubír are a boundless ocean that no poet can traverse. All pious souls that devoutly hear or recite the auspicious festivities that accompanied Ráma's investiture with the sacred thread and his marriage shall by his and Vaidehi's favour attain to everlasting felicity. Blessings on the lord of Himálay's daughter, from whom I have learnt my song: all who hearken to Hari's deeds acquire a constant access of devotion and incomparable faith. The love of Raghubír's feet like a flood extinguishes at once the fire of covetousness; and in this assurance Tulsi Dás devotes his every thought and word and act to Hari's praise.

*Dohá* 367.

The times are evil; the body is stained with filth; there is but one remedy; he only is wise who so thinketh and in faith meditates upon Hari.

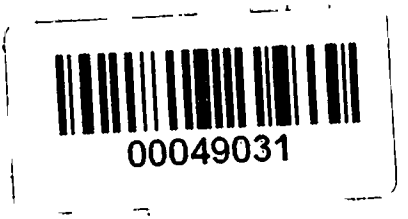
*Soratha* 31-32.

Have a hearty love for Hari's feet, discarding all vanities; much time has been spent in sleep; awake from the darkness of delusion. Whoever with love and reverence listens to the tale of Ráma and Síta's marriage shall be happy for ever, for Ráma's praises are an unfailing joy.

---

[*Thus endeth the book entitled* CHILDHOOD, *composed by Tulsi Dás for the bestowal of pure wisdom, continence, and contentedness; being the first descent into 'the holy lake of Ráma's deeds,' that cleanses from every defilement of the world.*]

NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES GOVERNMENT PRESS, ALLAHABAD.


00049031

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018